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August 2013

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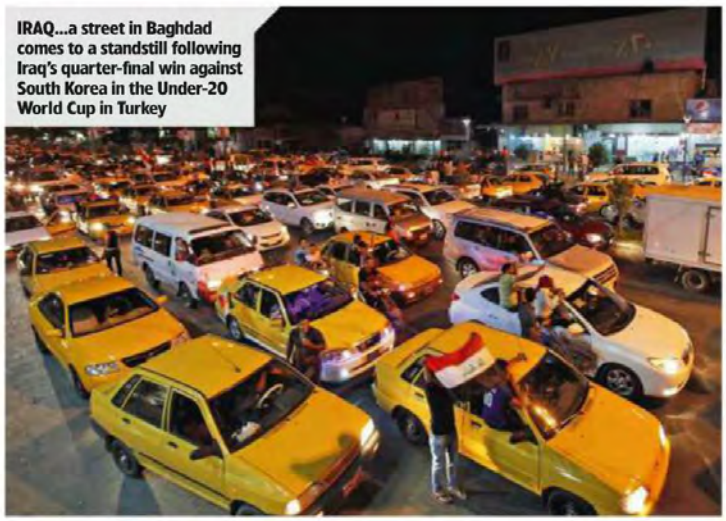
In Pictures

The global game caught on camera

TURKEY...France celebrate their penalty shoot-out win against Uruguay in Istanbul, to claim the Under-20 World Cup for the first time in their history



IRAQ...a street in Baghdad comes to a standstill following Iraq's quarter-final win against South Korea in the Under-20 World Cup in Turkey

SPAIN...Atletico Madrid fans invade the pitch during new signing David Villa's presentation at the club

USA...Costa Rica's Yeltsin Tejeda (top) and Stuart Holden of USA in the CONCACAF Gold Cup

NORTHERN IRELAND...local children in Celtic shirts play in front of a mural painted prior to Cliftonville's Champions League qualifier with the Scottish club

GERMANY...Pep Guardiola prepares to enter the stadium for the first time as the new coach of Bayern Munich

BRAZIL....Neymar is mobbed by ecstatic fans as he climbs the steps to receive his winners' medal after Brazil beat Spain in the Confederations Cup Final at the Maracana in Rio de Janeiro

PICTURES OF THE MONTH QR CODE

To see more of the best photos from the month, scan the QR code using any free QR reader that can be downloaded to your smartphone. You can also see the images by logging on to bit.ly/12D8Stp

FROM THE EDITOR

We review the Confederations Cup this month, as well as continuing our countdown to next years' World Cup in Brazil, but already thoughts are turning further to the future.

Sepp Blatter's call for the 2022 World Cup to be switched to the winter has ensured that the bizarre decision to award the finals to Qatar will spark wider debate about the competition's very existence. The debate will not just be about the timing of one tournament in the distant future, it will go to the heart of the club v country debate and will give some people the chance to question the relevance of international football. For *World Soccer*, a magazine that launched in 1960 to promote greater understanding of the international game, it is a debate we intend to contest vigorously.

> Blatter's call for the 2022 World Cup to be switched to the winter will spark wider debate about the competition's very existence

However, for the next few months, club football dominates – as witnessed by cover stars Neymar and Lionel Messi, both now of Barcelona. Their relationship provides a fascinating new dynamic as the 2013-14 season kicks off.

For overseas readers who have only just received their copy through the post, please bear in mind that the digital edition (left) is released on the UK on-sale date.

Gavin Hamilton, Editor

10 SIGNIFICANT EVENTS THIS MONTH

1. PSG sign Cavani from Napoli ..... page 10
2. Brazil win Confederations Cup ..... pages 32 &94
3. France win Under-20 World Cup ..... page 96
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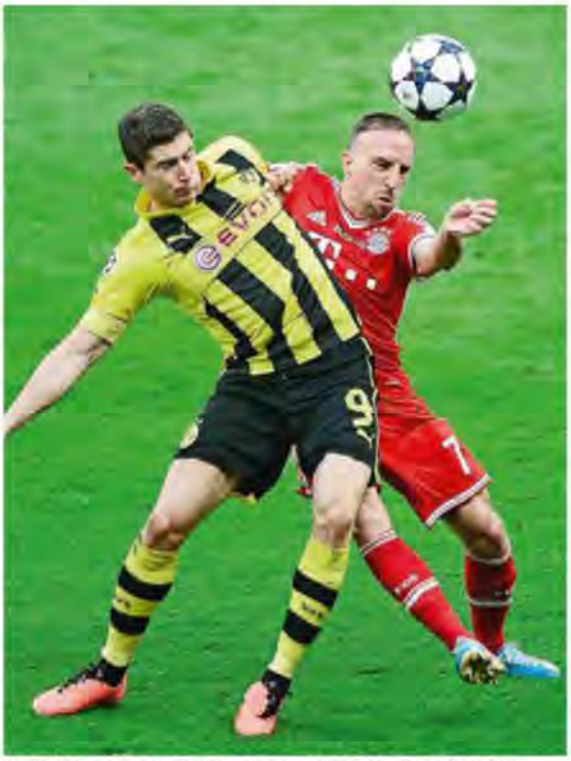
SWITZERLAND

UEFA announces Best Player in Europe shortlist



Shortlisted...Lewandowski (left) and Ribery both made the final list of 10

European governing body UEFA has announced the shortlist of 10 players who will feature in the second round of voting for its 2012-13 Best Player in Europe Award.

A panel of journalists will now decide a shortlist of three, from which the award will be decided in Monaco on August 29 in a live vote during the draw for the group stage of the Champions League.

This will be the third edition of the award, which was born out of an initiative by UEFA president Michel Platini, in partnership with the European Sports Media group. Lionel Messi and Andres Iniesta won in 2011 and 2012 respectively.

The shortlist of 10 players is: Gareth Bale (Tottenham Hotspur & Wales); Cristiano Ronaldo (Real Madrid & Portugal); Zlatan Ibrahimovc (PSG & Sweden); Robert Lewandowski (Borussia Dortmund & Poland); Lionel Messi (Barcelona & Argentina); Thomas Muller (Bayern Munich & Germany); Franck Ribery (Bayern Munich & France); Arjen Robben (Bayern Munich & Holland); Bastian Schweinsteiger (Bayern Munich & Germany); Robin Van Persie (Manchester United & Holland).

Past winner...Messi won in 2011

The final shortlist of three will be announced on August 6.

"Our club has fought homophobia and discrimination for several years"

Gernot Stenger, vice-president of St Pauli, explains why the German club have decided to fly the rainbow flag, the symbol of gay rights, from the roof of their main stand

AUSTRIA

Facing the heat...young football fans in Doha

Blatter calls for winter World Cup in Qatar in 2022

The prospect of a winter World Cup has moved closer after FIFA president Sepp Blatter called for the 2022 finals to be switched to avoid the intense summer heat in Qatar. He told a conference in Kitzbuhel, Austria, that he will propose a switch to the FIFA executive committee when it meets in October.

"The World Cup must be a festival of the people. But for it to be such a festival, you can't play football in the summer," said Blatter.

"You can cool down the stadiums but you can't cool down the whole country, and you can't simply cool down the ambience of a World Cup. The players must be able to play in the best conditions to play a good World Cup."

Blatter had previously said that the switch to a winter World Cup would have to be initiated by the Qatari hosts.

Any such change will be deeply resisted by European clubs, as well as the International Olympic Committee as the Winter Olympics is scheduled to be held in January 2022.

A switch to a winter World Cup could also raise the possibility of a legal challenge to FIFA from one of the unsuccessful bidding nations. The bids from USA, Australia, Japan and South Korea were based on a FIFA bidding document which stated the tournament must be played in the summer of 2022.

HEROES & VILLAINS

FABRICE REUPERNE

Scored the winning goal in the 93rd minute for Martinique as they beat Canada in the opening game of the CONCACAF Gold Cup.

Winner...Reuperne is thrown in the air by team-mates

KAZUYOSHI MIURA

The former Japan international broke his own record as the oldest goalscorer in the J.League, hitting the target in Yokohama's 3-1 win over Tochigi in the second division, after just 16 seconds, at the age of 46 years, four months and seven days.

VICTOR

The Atletico Mineiro goalkeeper, who saved a stoppage-time penalty against Tijuana to secure the Brazilian side's passage to the Libertadores Cup semi-finals, saved another spot-kick, against Newell's Old Boys, to send his team into this year's Final.

Right timing...Victor saves Mineiro again

EL SALVADOR

Their 2-1 win against Australia in the Under-20 World Cup was the country's first-ever victory in the finals of a major tournament.

TAITTINGER

The French company's announcement of a deal to become the "champagne of the World Cup" was insensitively timed, coming as it did with hundreds of thousands of people marching on the streets of Brazil in protest at the nation's financial chasm.

GERARDO BEDOYA

The Independiente Santa Fe player received a world-record 43rd career red card when he was sent off in the Libertadores Cup semi-final first leg against Olimpia.

Record red...Bedoya is dismissed again

SISU

The secretive hedge fund, which owns former Premier League club Coventry City, made the controversial decision to play next season's games 34 miles away from the Ricoh Arena, at Northampton Town.

TURKISH FANS

Stayed at home during the Under-20 World Cup, which had an average attendance of 5,230 – the lowest figure in the 36-year history of the competition.

No takers...empty seats at the Under-20 World Cup

"We want to win everything. Lots of people think the project will be a disaster, but they will change their mind once we've won a title"

New Monaco striker Radamel Falcao aims high at his unveiling in the principality

TRANSFERS

Cavani joins PSG

Cavani...the biggest deal of the summer so far

Napoli were always going to drive a hard bargain for Edinson Cavani. The Serie A club set the asking price for the Uruguayan striker at €63million, a figure which deterred Real Madrid, Chelsea and even Manchester City. But not Paris Saint-Germain.

Cavani agreed a five-year contract with the French champions after PSG and Napoli agreed a French-record €64m fee – the biggest deal of the summer so far.

"The transfer of Edinson Cavani is further proof of the club's ability to attract the best players in the world," said PSG president Nasser Al Khelaifi. "The player was seduced by the club's sporting project and is delighted to be joining an ambitious side, impatient to take on new challenges. We are especially happy to present such a hugely coveted player of immense talent to our fans."

PSG's "sporting project" also included a €10m after-tax annual salary for Cavani, yet their outlay does not come close to that of fellow Ligue 1 side Monaco, whose spending has so far totalled €144m.

Manchester City have been the next biggest spenders, laying out more than €100m on Fernandinho from Shakhtar Donetsk, Stevan Jovetic from Fiorentina, and Jesus Navas and Alvaro Negredo from Sevilla. Real Madrid have also spent heavily on young Spanish talent such as Isco (€30m, Malaga) and Asier Illarramendi (Real Sociedad, €30m). Further afield, Anzhi continue to spend, bringing back Christopher Samba from QPR and taking highly rated Aleksandr Kokorin from Dynamo Moscow for €19m.

With the exception of Manchester City, the trend of the summer has been that of big names passing up on the chance to move to the Premier League. City and Chelsea both declared an interest in Cavani, while Thiago Alcantara moved to Bayern Munich from Barcelona despite an offer from Manchester United. Similarly, Real Madrid signed Isco from Malaga despite interest from Manchester City, and Borussia Dortmund captured Shahktar's Armenian midfielder Henrikh Mkhitaryan, who had been a target for Liverpool.

John Holmesdale

BIGGEST TRANSFER DEALS OF SUMMER 2013

Serie A start...Gomez

Spanish switch...Illarramendi

New Blue...Schurrle

Edinson Cavani Napoli to Paris Saint-Germain, €63m
Radamel Falcao Atletico Madrid to Monaco, €60m
Neymar Santos to Barcelona, €57m
James Rodriguez Porto to Monaco, €45m
Fernandinho Shakhtar Donetsk to Manchester City, €40m
Mario Gotze Borussia Dortmund to Bayern Munich, €37m
Marquinhos Roma to Paris Saint-Germain, €35m
Asier Illarramendi Real Sociedad to Real Madrid, €30m
Isco, Malaga to Real Madrid, €30m
Henrikh Mkhitaryan Shakhtar Donetsk to Borussia Dortmund, €27.5m
Thiago Alcantara Barcelona to Bayern Munich, €25m
Stevan Jovetic Fiorentina to Manchester City, €25m
Joao Moutinho Porto to Monaco, €25m
Alvaro Negredo Sevilla to Manchester City, €25m
Andre Schurrle Bayer Leverkusen to Chelsea, €22m
Paulinho Corinthians to Tottenham Hotspur, €20m
Jesus Navas Sevilla to Manchester City, €20m
Aleksandr Kokorin Dynamo Moscow to Anzhi, €19m
Andy Carroll Liverpool to West Ham United, €18m
Mario Gomez Bayern Munich to Fiorentina, €15.5m
Igor Denisov Zenit to Anzhi, €15m
Victor Wanyama Celtic to Southampton, €14.5m
Wilfried Bony Vitesse to Swansea City, €13.9m
Mehdi Benatia Udinese to Roma, €13.5m
Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang Saint-Etienne to Borussia Dortmund, €13m
Angelo Ogbonna Torino to Juventus, €13m
Christopher Samba QPR to Anzhi, €11.6m
Simon Mignolet Sunderland to Liverpool, €10.6m
Jozy Altidore AZ to Sunderland, €10m
Jose Callejon Real Madrid to Napoli, €10m
Dejan Lovren Lyon to Southampton €10m
Dimitri Payet Lille to Marseille, €10m
Son Heung-min Hamburg to Bayer Leverkusen, €10m
Ricky Van Wolfswinkel Sporting Lisbon to Norwich City, €10m
Dries Mertens PSV to Napoli, €9.7m
Sokratis Papastathopoulos Werder Bremen to Borussia Dortmund, €9.5m
Marco Van Ginkel Vitesse to Chelsea, €9.4m
Carlos Tevez Manchester City to Juventus, €9m
Andreas Cornelius Copenhagen to Cardiff City, €8.7m
Iago Aspas Celta Vigo to Liverpool, €8.2m
Felipe Anderson Santos to Lazio, €8m
Benat Real Betis to Athletic Bilbao, €8m
Giovani Dos Santos Mallorca to Villarreal, €8m

● ***For all the summer's transfers go to http://www.worldsoccer.com/features/transfers-summer-2013 or bit.ly/1SZGQvf***

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"I only asked Rosell one thing: that having gone 6,000km away, that they leave me in peace"

Bayern Munich coach Pep Guardiola rounds on Barcelona president Sandro Rosell and Santos vice-president Odilio Rodrigues for spreading the rumour that he and the German club had attempted to pinch Neymar from under the noses of Barca

REPORTS we couldn't make up

1 In a break from pre-season training, Ajax coach Frank De Boer competed against former team-mate Edwin Van der Sar in the "King of the Keizersgracht" race in Amsterdam, an event held to promote rowing in Holland ahead of the World Championships that will be held there later this year.

De Boer comfortably beat Van der Sar but acknowledged it was more difficult than he first thought. "You have to get into a certain rhythm and it is quite complex," he admitted. "You need to bend and stretch your arms at the right time, and put as much strength in both arms – otherwise you go diagonally!"

2 While several Premier League sides were jetting off on pre-season tours to Asia, other European clubs had more modest ways of preparing for the forthcoming campaign.

Parma's players began their preparations for the Serie A season by running and exercising on the beaches of Rosa Marina Resort in Ostuni, Italy.

In Germany, Hanover players took part in a dragon-boat race on nearby Lake Maschsee.

3 In Brazil, Internacional striker Maurides was carried off on a stretcher after injuring a knee during a back-flip goal celebration in a Brazilian Cup tie against America Mineiro. The 19-year-old had scored in the 89th minute to give his side a 3-1 lead.

4 Karbala coach Mohammed Abbas died and five of the Iraqi club's players were left in a critical condition after they were beaten up by security forces following a league game against Al Quwa Al Jawiya.

Abbas, 48, had intervened on behalf of a player, Maitham Hamza, who was involved in an argument with members of the Iraqi Special Forces after the match, which Karbala had lost 4-2.

WINNERS

PRESTATYN TOWN
The Welsh club won on their debut in Europe, beating Liepjas Metalurgs of Latvia on penalties in the Europa League.

FRANCE UNDER-20S
Les Bleus won the Under-20 World Cup for the first time after they beat Uruguay on penalties in the Final.

BENFICA
The club's pay-per-view TV channel will air its home league games exclusively – a ground-breaking move in Europe.

DAVID MOYES
Like Alex Ferguson, he lost his first game in charge of Manchester United when beaten 1-0 by Singha All-Stars in a friendly match in Bangkok.

TAHITI
Their 10-0 loss to Spain in the Confederations Cup was the biggest ever defeat in the final phase of a FIFA tournament.

ENGLAND JUNIORS
The under-21s and under-20s played a combined total of six matches in finals tournaments this summer and failed to win a single game.

LOSERS

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The Real Godfather

Robin Friday
Better than Best
Cardiff

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King of the Kippax

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(Brazil)

Bob Paisley

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"I feel just like a kid again. Giving pleasure to our fans is my motivation to carry on playing"

Much to the fore in Atletico Mineiro's Libertadores Cup run, veteran Ronaldinho proves there's life in the old dog yet

12 MATCHES THAT MATTERED

Recent crunch games from around the globe

VELEZ SARSFIELD 1
NEWELL'S OLD BOYS 0
Despite having Fabian Cubero sent off, Velez hung on after Lucas Pratto's early goal to win the Argentinian championship play-off.

SAN JOSE EARTHQUAKES 3
LOS ANGELES GALAXY 2
San Jose scored twice in injury time to come from behind and beat Galaxy in the "California Clasico" in front of a sell-out crowd of over 50,000.

BRAZIL 3
SPAIN 0
Spain's world-record run of 29 competitive matches unbeaten came to an end as they lost in the Confederations Cup Final to the tournament hosts.

SHIRAK 3
TRE PENNE 0
Thirty-eight days after Bayern Munich won at Wembley, the Champions League restarted with Armenia's Shirak beating their visitors from San Marino.

IF FUGLAFJORDUR 0
LINFIELD 2
The club from Northern Ireland recorded their first away win in European competition for 47 years with a Europa League victory in the Faroe Islands.

OLIMPIA 2
SANTE FE 0
This first-leg victory put the Paraguayans on their way to the Libertadores Cup Final as they eventually overcame the team from Colombia 2-1 on aggregate.

CANADA 0
MARTINIQUE 1
The tiny Caribbean island stunned Canada with victory, thanks to a goal from Fabrice Reuperne, on the opening day of the CONCACAF Gold Cup.

IRAQ UNDER-20s 3
SOUTH KOREA UNDER-20s 3 aet
(Iraq won on penalties)
Iraq fell behind three times before taking their Under-20 World Cup quarter-final tie to penalties, with Farhan Shakor scoring the winner.

MEXICO 1
PANAMA 2
Gabriel Torres scored twice as Panama beat Mexico in the CONCACAF Gold Cup – their first victory in the 10 meetings since their first encounter in 1938.

ATLETICO MINEIRO 2
NEWELL'S OLD BOYS 0
Trailing 2-0 from the first leg in Argentina, the Brazilian side levelled the scores on aggregate before winning on penalties to reach the Libertadores Cup Final.

FRANCE UNDER-20s 0
URUGUAY UNDER-20s 0 aet
(France won on penalties)
France won the Under-20 World Cup for the first time, winning on spot-kicks in the Final, which was staged in Istanbul.

CORINTHIANS 2
SAO PAULO 0
Having won the away leg 2-1, goals from Romarinho and Danilo gave last year's Libertadores Cup winners Corinthians a 4-1 win in the South American Recopa.

■ OBITUARIES

Semi-final...Borgonovo scores against Bayern

STEFANO BORGONOVO
(1964-2013)
The former Milan, Fiorentina and Udinese forward died after a lengthy battle with motor neurone disease.

Borgonovo was a member of Milan's European Cup-winning squad in 1990, scoring in the semi-final win over Bayern Munich, and also won three caps for Italy.

He was diagnosed with motor neurone disease, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, at the age of 42 and, with his wife Chantal, began campaigning to raise awareness of the disease through the Stefano Borgonovo Foundation.

"Stefano Borgonovo was and will remain an example for us all," said UEFA president Michel Platini.

Writing in *Gazzetta dello Sport*, Roberto Baggio said of his former Fiorentina and Italy team-mate: "Do you know what made me really happy? I don't think I ever told you.

"It was setting you up to score and seeing that infinite happiness in your eyes."

JAN ZLOCHA (1942-2013)
Defender who won the 1969 European Cup-winners' Cup with Slovan Bratislava and represented Czechoslovakia at the 1970 World Cup. He also won domestic league titles with Slovan and their rivals Spartak Trnava.

JACK CROMPTON (1921-2013)
The goalkeeper was part of the Manchester United team that won the 1948 FA Cup, which was manager Matt Busby's first trophy at Old Trafford. He later became a member of Busby's backroom staff as United won the European Cup Final at Wembley in 1968.

Paul GARDNER

THE WORLDWIDE VIEW

Blatter's arrogance typifies a game that has grown too big for its boots

Well, at least the Brazilian government now knows where it stands. It has been informed by FIFA president Sepp Blatter that the massive street demonstrations and protests that exploded during the Confederations Cup were unacceptable to FIFA. The Brazilian government, says Blatter, is "now aware that next year the World Cup should not be disturbed".

The iron-fisted arrogance of that statement is shocking. Blatter, elected to office by a small group of football administrators, feels entitled to issue orders to Dilma Rousseff, the democratically elected president of one of the world's largest countries. Blatter does not even feel he has to utter an "or else..." to back up his ultimatum.

Blatter *could* threaten to move next year's World Cup to another country. While difficult, but not impossible, it is also unlikely. Everyone knows that the show must go on. When it comes to a conflict between spending money on football or social services, then football must win. At least for another year. After that, I'd doubt whether FIFA will be too concerned about Brazil's social problems.

In just one year, as Blatter well knows, Rousseff cannot solve Brazil's woes. But maybe she can ensure a "peaceful" tournament by clamping down on the protesters. More security, more police – is that what Blatter expects?

This situation – billions of dollars being spent on sport by a country that is short-changing its population when it comes to necessary social services – is one that the World Cup shares with the Olympics.

In 1968 I was in Mexico City, working for the Mexican Olympic Committee. Trouble started with small, peaceful student protests, which quickly grew into massive marches, and reached a ghastly climax with the appalling Massacre of Tlatelolco.

Two years later in Mexico there were no protests at the 1970 World Cup. The whiff of grapeshot had done its intimidatory work. Eight years later, the military government in Argentina made sure there was no trouble. In his apartment in central Buenos Aires, Nobel-Prize winner Jorge Luis Borges told me of his liking for football, but not for the World Cup, arguing: "There are two hospitals closed down right now, and people without places to live. We are spending all the money on football."

It is a lament that has been taken up in Brazil. Too bad, says Blatter, but "FIFA cannot be held responsible" for the problems. The protests – as long as they are peaceful – "have to be accepted" he says, with evident reluctance.

> Brazil, the world's number one football, nation, has done more for FIFA than FIFA has ever done for Brazil

Well, not really. The best solution would be to avoid problem countries like Brazil. If the protests recur, says Blatter, then "we have to question whether we made the wrong decision" in awarding the cup to Brazil.

Again, a simply shocking statement. Brazil, the world's number one football nation, has done much more for FIFA than FIFA has ever done for Brazil. Now it is trashed by the president of FIFA – either because it doesn't enjoy the advanced living standards of Blatter's Switzerland or because it can't keep its citizens from protesting in the streets.

Now we have the Brazilian congress investigating just how much money is being spent on the tournament. Some nerve, eh?

The problem countries like Brazil will have to be avoided in future. Forget about soccer history and traditions – better to stick with the rich nations. Like Qatar, say. No fear of demos there. Just a difficulty with the weather. No problem says Blatter. FIFA will switch the World Cup to the winter.

If that can't be done then, maybe, by 2022, Blatter will have agreed with higher powers to switch the seasons around. WS

"There certainly was agreement between the clubs"

Nigerian federation spokesman Ademola Olajire announces a full enquiry after two domestic games end up with 79-0 and 67-0 scorelines

TOP 10 STARS OF THE UNDER-20 WORLD CUP

Surprise...Adnan

Golden Boot...Assifuah

Five goals...Jese

Sparkling...Quintero

Fantastic season...Pogba

CLIFFORD ABOAGYE
Ghana
A diminutive playmaker who was behind much of Ghana's best moves as they progressed to the semi-finals.

ALI ADNAN
Iraq
Full-back who starred in Iraq's surprise run to the semi-finals.

EBENEZER ASSIFUAH
Ghana
The Liberty Professionals striker finished as the tournament's top scorer with six goals.

BRUMA
Portugal
Winger who also weighed in with five goals for the quarter-finalists.

GEOFFREY KONDOGBIA
France
Defensive midfielder who is already established in Sevilla's first team.

JESE
Spain
Real Madrid winger who scored five goals even though the favourites went out in the quarter-finals.

NICOLAS LOPEZ
Uruguay
The Roma centre-forward was an adept maker and taker of chances.

JOSE GIMENEZ
Uruguay
The centre-back, who joined Atletico Madrid this summer, was a solid presence in Uruguay's run to the Final.

PAUL POGBA
France
Les Bleus' skipper collected the official FIFA player of the tournament award and also had an outstanding season with Juventus.

JUAN QUINTERO
Colombia
The Porto youngster lived up to the hype, sparkling even though his country lost to South Korea in the quarter-finals.

TURKEY

Fenerbahce back in Champions League draw after appeal

Turkish champions Fenerbahce were drawn against Salzburg in the Champions League third qualifying round after their two-year European ban for match fixing was temporarily lifted.

Fenerbahce and fellow Turkish club Besiktas, who have qualified for the Europa League, were handed European bans earlier this year after a protracted UEFA inquiry following a domestic match-fixing scandal in 2011.

Fenerbahce were banned for two years and Besiktas one by European soccer's governing body UEFA. Both appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), who lifted the bans until a final decision is taken.

CAS said the final decision on Fenerbahce will be issued before August 28, one day before the draw for the Champions League group stage takes place in Monaco.

UEFA could be left with a headache if Fenerbahce beat Salzburg, win the next qualifying round tie and then lose their appeal at CAS.

Appeal...Fenerbahce were included in the draw

David CONN

AT THE HEART OF THE GAME

Don't be fooled – the Americans are here to make money

When the American billionaire Shahid Khan bought Fulham he delivered an abrupt reminder of how far English football has travelled in its mission to sell its clubs abroad. Owner of the NFL franchise the Jacksonville Jaguars, Khan – who made his fortune engineering bumpers for trucks – gave the reassurance that he will be a "custodian" for Fulham.

This was the same self-description used by generations of club chairmen through the 20th century as they sought to assure fans that they were not helping themselves to more than the boardroom buffet. Many clubs were run badly in this tradition, but many chairmen did support clubs financially and did not make much money out of it themselves. The sale of the clubs to the vagaries of the global market is a huge historic change, about which there has been almost no debate, planning or discussion by the Premier League or Football Association.

> Khan's arrival at Fulham means that six Premier League clubs now have American billionaire owners

Khan's arrival means that – alongside the Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich at Chelsea and Sheikh Mansour of Abu Dhabi at Manchester City – the Premier League now has American billionaire owners of six clubs.

With the exception of Sunderland owner Ellis Short, the Americans all own sports franchises in the US. It has been a gradual process of acquisition since the six children of Malcolm Glazer bought Manchester United with all that hideous debt in 2005, so it is still somehow a shock to realise that American investors own United, Liverpool and Arsenal, Aston Villa, Sunderland and now Fulham.

There must be a mix of motives for the US investors in buying English Premier League – the EPL, as only Americans seem to call it – clubs. Some, like John Henry of the Fenway Sports Group which owns Liverpool, were in effect semi-retired from their businesses and looking for a new project. The football clubs are trophy assets, too, although that seems more a motivation for Mansour, who has City projecting an image of glamorous modernity for his country, and Abramovich, a man of ostentatious yachts.

The Americans are more sombre and less showy, in general, about their club ownership; mostly they stay out of public displays and get on with running their sports businesses. It would be naive, having acknowledged all that, to think the reason for their arrival is not primarily the money to be made in the Premier League. It illustrates how far we have travelled from the language of custodians, that this is not an issue of any great concern to the football public.

Faced with a concentration of money-driven men with collectively little previous knowledge of the game, the football authorities shrug and ask what's the harm? These are generally competent business people, it's in their interests to be successful, so what does it matter that they are financially acquisitive and from a country which has never "got" football?

Yet more subtle than a list of potential specific issues, this is a great and fundamental change, a cultural concentration of a financially-driven US tradition of sports ownership.

Many in English football still believe that the Premier League breakaway of 1992 was damaging and the game's money should be shared more equally. The movement to have supporters involved in owning and running clubs has government backing. The outgoing FA chairman David Bernstein has lamented that the English game is imbalanced, and too little priority given to the England team, whose primacy was supposed to be the central point of the Premier League's formation.

It is difficult to think that any of this, more equal sharing of income, mutual form of club ownership, socially responsible ticket pricing, the need to field more England-qualified players, can be furthered by billionaires from the US, for whom football, and the "EPL", is a business investment. WS

"What encouraged me to come to Napoli was the passion and enthusiasm about this place. It reminds me of Liverpool"

New Napoli coach Rafa Benitez doing what he does best: talking lovingly of Merseyside

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

Appointments, sackings and loans

IN

Switch...Garcia

EUROPE

Former England manager **STEVE McCLAREN** joined the backroom staff at Queens Park Rangers, who were relegated from the Premier League last season. **OSCAR GARCIA**, who coached Maccabi Tel Aviv to the Israeli title last term, took charge of Brighton & Hove Albion, who are also in the English second tier.

JAN KOZAK quit club side Kosice to take over as coach of Slovakia's national team. He signed a contract until November 2015 to replace joint-bosses Stanislav Griga and Michal Hipp. **MARIANS PAHARS** stepped up from Latvia's Under-21 team to take over from Aleksandrs Starkovs as coach of the senior side.

Former Scotland striker **GORDON DURIE**, who had to quit as boss of East Fife in November due to ill health, joined Rangers' coaching staff to work with their reserves and under-20s. **ALLAN JOHNSTON**, who led Queen of the South to the Scottish Second Division title last season, replaced Kenny Shiels as Kilmarnock manager.

Italy Under-20s coach **LUIGI DI BIAGIO** stepped up an age group to replace Devis Mangia, who led the Under-21s to the Final of the European Championship two weeks earlier.

CONCACAF

Former Real Madrid boss **BENITO FLORO** was named national coach of Canada.

CARLOS BOCANEGRA joined MLS side Chivas USA after his contract with Scottish club Rangers was cancelled by mutual consent.

AFRICA

WINFRIED SCHAFER will take charge of Jamaica for the remainder of their World Cup qualifiers. **TOM SAINTFEIT** replaced Edington Ng'onamo as coach of Malawi.

Kenyan club Gor Mahia appointed Scottish coach **BOBBY WILLIAMSON** on a one-year contract.

CAF Champions League contenders Zamalek of Egypt appointed **HELMY TOULAN** as coach while **MILLER GOMES** took charge of Angola's Recreativo Libolo.

Giggs and Neville take coaching posts at United

Manchester United's **RYAN GIGGS** was appointed player-coach at the club, while **PHIL NEVILLE**, who retired as a player at the end of last season, was named first-team coach.

Return...Neville (left)

New boss...Hassan

ASIA

Morocco midfielder **ABDELAZIZ BARRADA** joined UAE Pro-League side Al Jazira from Spain's Getafe.

A-League champions Central Coast Mariners signed defender **MARCEL SEIP** from Dutch club VVV Venlo.

Ex-Egypt striker **HOSSAM HASSAN** replaced Adnan Hamad as coach of Jordan, while ex-Italy midfielder **GIUSEPPE GIANNINI** succeeded Theo Bucker in charge of Lebanon.

Brazilian midfielder **MOSSORO** joined AFC Champions League quarter-finalists Al Ahli of Saudi Arabia from Portuguese club Braga.

AFC Champions League quarter-finalists Al Shabab signed striker **NAIF HAZAZI** from Saudi rivals Al Ittihad. **NASSER AL SHAMRANI** and **SEBASTIAN TAGLIABUE** left Al Shabab for Al Hilal of Saudi Arabia and the UAE's Al Wahda respectively.

OUT

Leonardo quits PSG post

Paris Saint-Germain sporting director **LEONARDO** has left the Ligue 1 side. The former Milan and Internazionale coach joined the club in July 2011, but was recently given a 13-month touchline ban for pushing an official following a 1-1 draw with Valenciennes in May.

Gone...Leonardo has stepped down

Exit...Juninho

CONCACAF

Veteran Brazil midfielder **JUNINHO PERNAMBUCANO** cancelled his contract with New York Red Bulls after just six months in MLS.

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Brian GLANVILLE

THE VOICE OF FOOTBALL

Football's heroes are too easily forgotten

The trouble with football, at least in England, is that it isn't like cricket. Historically at least. It isn't, for that matter, like Italy either, where nostalgia is a major feature of football, where matches and players long past are often exhumed. Or for that matter in Uruguay, of which Ondino Viera, manager of the side which contested, somewhat aggressively, the 1966 World Cup finals, said to me: "Other countries have their history, Uruguay has its football."

When I contrast our football with our cricket, I think of the alarming speed with which English heroes are forgotten. Yet in cricket who could forget WG Grace, that bearded, wilful, giant of the 19th-century game, at once majestic and mercenary, a beacon of his time, yet capable of the most blatant subterfuge?

Quite recently there was published a highly praised biography of Harold Larwood, the Nottinghamshire fast bowler whose ruthless bodyline tactics routed Australia in the Test matches of 1933. But when once I mentioned Eddie Hapgood – my boyhood hero, left-back and skipper of Arsenal and England – to Alan Smith, one of the most literate and intelligent footballers of recent times and also of Arsenal and England, I drew a total blank.

Perhaps one can find some kind of an explanation in the fact that soccer, after the early dominance as such of the Old Etonians and public school Wanderers team, became for long years an almost proletarian pastime. Cricket had for generations been a sport dear to the upper and middle classes, infected by abysmal snobbery.

Lord Hawke, when he was the foremost figure in the MCC, declared that he hoped that no professional would ever captain England. And until well into the 20th century, amateurs and professionals took to the field through different gates of the pavilion. In Italy, as in South America, there were no such dichotomies between sports – and no cricket.

All this to precede one's interest, surprise and occasional bewilderment over the recent *World Soccer* polls on the greatest players and managers.

> Banks' almost incredible one-handed save from Pele's bouncing header was arguably the finest ever seen in a World Cup finals

Mistake...Yashin is caught napping by Beckenbauer's free-kick in the 1966 World Cup semi-final

Players first. And goalkeepers foremost. How, one wondered, did Lev Yashin romp home with a 25-point lead over Gordon Banks who rates second?

If World Cups are any criterion, then it should be remembered that Yashin, for all his dramatic black-jerseyed imperiousness, blundered badly twice in the quarter-finals of the 1962 World Cup. Against Chile, the hosts, he let in two embarrassing goals and the USSR went out. Four years later, at Everton, in the semi-final versus West Germany, he was beaten by an insidiously curling free-kick from Franz Beckenbauer into his right-hand corner – for which he was blamed publicly by his manager but less so by me, who happened to be there.

Banks' almost incredible one-handed save from Pele's bouncing header in the 1970 World Cup in Guadalajara, which I also happened to see, and admire, was arguably the finest ever seen in a World Cup finals.

And I still believe that England would probably have beaten West Germany in that roasting Leon Stadium in the quarter-finals of the 1970 World Cup had Banks not so mysteriously been ruled out overnight by food poisoning when, as he much later assured me, he had eaten and drunk at dinner exactly the same as every other member of the squad.

After the tournament, the journalist Bob Oxby went to Washington to visit his cousin, the prominent senator Stuart Symington, who jovially assured him: "That was the CIA. You don't think we were going to let England go on and beat Brazil!"

Who knows? But I've become more and more convinced that there was dirty work at the crossroads and poor Peter Bonetti had a nightmarish game in goal.

Save of a lifetime...Pele cannot believe it as Banks sprawls after stretching to tip the Brazilian's goalbound header over the bar

Giants of the game...Busby (left) and Ferguson share Old Trafford memories

Fergie euphoria is hard to comprehend

Among managers, Alex Ferguson came top with an astonishing and puzzling 49 votes; three ahead of Holland's Rinus Michels who would have been my first choice.

This seemed the result of the general euphoria, not to say the deluge of flattery, which descended on Ferguson when he announced his retirement after what had, beyond doubt, been a phenomenally protracted run of success at Manchester United. He won two European Cups as well, but as one somewhat sceptical leader writer pointed out, in each case – against Bayern Munich and Chelsea – they were breathlessly close-run things. Not to be forgotten was his splendid hegemony at Aberdeen, with whom he broke the Glaswegian monopoly of Rangers and Celtic, and even beat Real Madrid in the Final of the European Cup-winners Cup.

But at international level, surely the acme of the game, the fact is that he failed. In 1986 in Mexico, he was in charge of a Scotland team which rarely rose above the mediocre and was quickly eliminated. Things might have been so different had Kenny Dalglish, then in a tremendous streak of form, played. But he withdrew through injury and there were rumours that Ferguson's omission of his Liverpool team-mate, the elegant but sometimes casual centre-back Alan Hansen, played a part in his decision. Ferguson was, in fact, my fifth choice.

Matt Busby, the true architect of Manchester United's post-war success, the progenitor of the so called "Busby Babes" and the manager who defied the embittered isolationism of the Football

> Matt Busby was the true architect of Manchester United's post-war success

League secretary Alan Hardaker to take United into the European Cup, resuscitated a team without a ground. Old Trafford was bombed to bits in the war and for years United had to share Maine Road with Manchester City. And even though injured in the Munich air crash of February 1958, Busby battled back to lead Manchester United 10 years later to the first English victory in a European Cup Final.

Busby got one meagre vote – just one less than Alf Ramsey who did win a World Cup and previously transformed Ipswich Town from a Third Division anonymity to the champions of the League. And exactly as many as Walter Winterbottom who, thanks to the patronage of Stanley Rous as FA secretary, survived 16 years in England office despite some dismal defeats.

And surely there should have been a place for the ebullient little Yorkshireman, George Raynor, whose coaching and shrewd tactics galvanised Swedish football. He won a coruscating Olympic tournament at Wembley in 1948, took his depleted team to the World Cup finals of 1950 and reached the World Cup Final in Stockholm in 1958 when several of his stars-turned-pro at last came home.

Sunderland acquisition is a late-blooming star

Stones that the builder rejected you might say. Emanuele Giaccherini, a major success in Italy's attack in the recent Confederations Cup, has now been acquired by Sunderland, who offered Juventus no less than £6.8million for his transfer. This for a 28-year-old player who has finally emerged with mighty Juventus as a salient star. Beginning with Cesena in 2003, he stayed a season, then it was down to C2 with Forli, Bellaria Igea and Pavia, before returning to Cesena in 2008. He stayed there until 2011 when he was bought by Juventus.

A little fellow, standing 1.67m and weighing just 60 kilos, he hardly ever scored, never out of single figures. Yet Italian football has long catered for the late developers which our own major clubs so seldom do.

Now Giaccherini is finally a star. WS

Out of the shadows...Giaccherini celebrates his goal against Brazil in the Confederations Cup

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THE QUALIFIERS IRAN

Seventy-two hours of national ecstasy

Political change and World Cup qualification signal a new beginning. By Adel Ferdowsipour

Qualified...Iran celebrate after victory in South Korea sent them through to next year's World Cup finals

When Chinese referee Tan Hai blew his whistle in the 94th minute of the final World Cup qualifier against South Korea in Ulsan, it signalled a nationwide street party in Iran. Three days after the national outpouring of joy that hailed the unexpected presidential election victory of moderate Hassan Rohani, Iran booked a trip to Brazil 2014 after beating the Koreans on their home soil for the first time.

For Iran coach Carlos Queiroz it was a deeply satisfying personal triumph over counterpart Choi Kang-Hee, whose pre-match mind games had culminated in him claiming that the Portuguese would be watching the finals at home on television.

Iran's road to Brazil started with a two-legged victory over the Maldives and then a 6-0 thrashing of 10-man Bahrain as they topped their first group stage.

The next hurdle was a group with Lebanon, Qatar, South Korea and Uzbekistan. A late win in Uzbekistan was followed by a home draw with Qatar and an embarrassing defeat in Lebanon. The pressure was mounting on Queiroz before the crucial home game against South Korea but, as is so often with Iran, the need to get a result brought out the best in them. Despite going down to 10 men, a goal from captain Javad Nekounam secured a vital win in front of 100,000 fans. However, a home defeat by Uzbekistan in the next game drastically reduced their chances of automatic qualification.

It all came down to the final three qualifiers in June: at home to Lebanon, and away to Qatar and South Korea. By now, expectations were at a low ebb and absence through injury of Fulham winger Ashkan Dejagah, a key player, and the controversial withdrawal of first-choice keeper Mehdi Rahmati after a disagreement with Queiroz gave fans even less cause for optimism.

Yet, against all the odds, Iran won all three games to top their group. The hero of the hour was Reza Ghoochannejhad, a 25-year-old forward raised in Holland by Iranian parents and now known as "Gucci" by an adoring nation. He scored in all three games, crucially in both of the 1-0 wins in Qatar and South Korea.

When Iran qualified for France 98 by beating Australia on away goals in Melbourne, a reporter commented the weight of the Earth must have been reduced for a second as 70million Iranians jumped for joy. Sixteen years later, on June 18, 2013, history repeated itself. WS

For the record

QUALIFICATION CAMPAIGN

SECOND ROUND

23.07.11	Maldives (h)	4-0
28.07.11	Maldives (a)	1-0

THIRD ROUND, GROUP E

02.09.11	Indonesia (h)	3-0
06.09.11	Qatar (a)	1-1
11.10.11	Bahrain (h)	6-0
11.11.11	Bahrain (a)	1-1
15.11.11	Indonesia (a)	4-1
29.02.12	Qatar (h)	2-2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iran	6	3	3	0	17	5	12
Qatar	6	2	4	0	10	5	10
Bahrain	6	2	3	1	13	7	9
Indonesia	6	0	0	6	3	26	0

FOURTH ROUND, GROUP A

03.06.12	Uzbekistan (a)	1-0
12.06.12	Qatar (h)	0-0
11.09.12	Lebanon (a)	0-1
16.10.12	South Korea (h)	1-0
14.11.12	Uzbekistan (h)	0-1
04.06.13	Qatar (a)	1-0
11.06.13	Lebanon (h)	4-0
18.06.13	South Korea (a)	1-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iran	8	5	1	2	8	2	16
South Korea	8	4	2	2	13	7	14
Uzbekistan	8	4	2	2	11	6	14
Qatar	8	2	1	5	5	13	7
Lebanon	8	1	2	5	3	12	5

Players used in qualifiers

FIFTEEN MATCHES
Jalal HOSSEINI (1,350 mins), Mohammad KHALATBARI (844 mins)

FOURTEEN
Javad NEKOUNAM (1,207 mins)

THIRTEEN
Mehdi RAHMATI (1,170 mins), Khosro HEYDARI (1,097 mins)

TWELVE
Andranik TEYMOURIAN (971 mins)

TEN
Hadi AGHILI (879 mins), Mehrdad POOLADI (872 mins), Karim ANSARI (566 mins)

NINE
Hossein MAHINI (515 mins)

EIGHT
Ali KARIMI (700 mins), Mojtaba JABARI (595 mins), Gholam REZAEI (381 mins), Ehsan HAJI SAFI (312 mins)

SEVEN
Pejman MONTAZERI (630 mins)

SIX
Mohammad GHAZI (355 mins), Mazyar ZARE (204 mins)

FIVE
Reza GHOOCHANNEJHAD (431 mins), Masoud SHOJAEI (389 mins), Pejman NOURI (278 mins)

FOUR
Ashkan DEJAGAH (306 mins), Mohammad NORI (245 mins)

THREE
Rahman AHMADI (270 mins), Hashem BEIKZADEH (260 mins), Ghasem HADADIFAR (250 mins), Milad MIDAVOODI (127 mins)

TWO
Amirhossein SADEGHI (180 mins), Hadi NOROZIPORI (155 mins), Farhad MAJIDI (110 mins), Javad KAZEMEIAN (74 mins)

ONE
Mohammad EBRAHIMI (45 mins), Mohammad GHOLAMI (21 mins), Mohammad NOSRATI (21 mins), Mohsen MOSALMAN (20 mins), Saeed DAGHIGHI (13 mins), Milad ZANIDPOUR (12 mins), Alireza ABBASFARD (11 mins), Omid EBRAHIMI (2 mins)

SCORERS IN QUALIFIERS

SIX
Javad NEKOUNAM

THREE
Karim ANSARI, Reza GHOOCHANNEJHAD, Mojtaba JABARI, Mohammad KHALATBARI

TWO
Hadi AGHILI, Ashkan DEJAGAH, Gholam REZAEI, Andranik TEYMOURIAN

ONE
Saeed DAGHIGHI, Seyed HOSSEINI, Ali KARIMI, Milad MIDAVOODI

The coach

Third time lucky?...Queiroz

Carlos Queiroz

Having missed the 2002 World Cup after falling out with the South African FA then leading unconvincing Portugal in 2010, could 2014 be the highlight for Alex Ferguson's former assistant at Manchester United?

Inspirational...Nekounam

Reza Ghoochannejhad

The unexpected hero whose sharp finishes in each of the last three games gave the perfect reply to his local critics.

The key players

Javad Nekounam

An inspirational leader with a knack of scoring crucial goals. The former Osasuna midfielder's know-how is vital to a team not used to the big stage. "rehearsal" for the World Cup.

Ashkan Dejagah

The ex-Germany Under-23 was badly missed in the final three crucial qualifiers. After a fruitful debut season with Fulham, he was a vital factor in Iran's qualifying campaign with his flair and stamina.

Vital...Dejagah

Hero...Ghoochannejhad's goals in the last three games saw Iran home

The unanswered questions

Who will play in goal?

After the unexpected retirement of Mehdi Rahmati, who had been the undisputed first choice in recent years, Queiroz must now chose between the impressive but internationally inexperienced Rahman Ahmadi and opening the door for German-born Daniel Davari of Eintracht Braunschweig.

Time to step up...Ahmadi

Can Iran arrange some warm-up games against credible opponents?

Sanctions against the country in recent years have put teams off playing games in Iran. Maybe recent political changes can alter the situation.

Do Iran have enough flair?

With Ali Karimi having retired from international football, and Masoud Shojaei's inconsistency, a lack of creativity in midfield is a worry.

Reasons to be cheerful

Solid...Iran conceded only two goals in their last eight qualifying games

Solid defence

Jalal Hosseini and Pejman Montazeri have established a formidable partnership in the centre and Iran conceded only two goals in their final eight qualifiers.

Tactical discipline

Under Quieroz, especially in the last three qualifiers in June, the players kept their shape well.

Total underdogs

Having never got out of the group stage in three previous World Cup appearances, nobody will be expecting much from Iran – and that could work in their favour.

Reasons to be fearful

Lack of Euro experience

Of the starting line-up against South Korea, only three of the team were playing abroad – and two of those (Andranik Teymourian and Shojaei) are out of contract and may return to Iran.

Old team

Their average age in the last game against South Korea was 29.7 years.

Lack of goals

In the final eight qualifiers, Iran scored only eight goals – and four of those were against Lebanon.

The new kid in town

Neymar, the latest global icon to join Barcelona, has finally arrived in Catalonia and his relationship with the club's biggest star, Lionel Messi, could be the defining feature of the 2013-14 season. By Sid Lowe

FCB

Conviction came in the Confederations Cup. The doubts that surrounded Neymar were blown away, game after game and goal after goal, culminating in the destruction of Spain in the Final. But for Spanish fans, the real test – the moments that matter most – will come when the Brazilian is wearing Barcelona's *blaugrana*.

But the 21-year-old left one hell of a calling card this summer. If they weren't sure before, now they can hardly wait for him to arrive at Camp Nou.

"Neymar knew that the world was watching and it took him just three minutes to rise to the challenge," ran one match report after Brazil's first game, against Japan. Neymar scored immediately and virtually never stopped; right up until the moment he faced the world and European champions in the dream Final. And then Brazil took their opponents apart, with Neymar the scorer of a wonderful goal and playing a starring role in the 3-0 victory. Too fast, too skilful and just too good for Spain.

On the morning of the match, the Catalan newspaper *Sport* was declaring it "Barcelona's Final". They offered up an entire XI made up of players from Camp Nou, all of whom would be on display. Afterwards, there was only one man to lead on as Neymar took centre stage. This was his tournament – and the future may be his too. He was second-top scorer, man of the match in the Final and player of the tournament.

In Barcelona, they could not fail to notice how he tortured Real Madrid's Alvaro Arbeloa in the Final – although Gerard Pique's sending-off for bringing him down made less comfortable viewing. Now, they were convinced: Neymar really is very good indeed.

When Barcelona signed Neymar for

Master and pupil...Messi (right) gives Neymar a run for his money during Barcelona's 2011 Club World Cup Final triumph over Santos; the pair are now teaming up at Camp Nou

€57million, the media reaction in Catalonia was largely positive. It could hardly be otherwise. New signings are invariably feted and the excitement over Neymar had built over a long courtship. Reports on his performances were constant and his goals invariably shown on Spanish television – and not just because they were invariably impressive.

Barcelona had also achieved his signature ahead of Real Madrid, with president Sandro Rosell's connections to Brazilian football proving decisive.

It is over two years since he first moved to bring Neymar into the orbit

Stunning...Neymar drives home Brazil's second goal in the Confederations Cup Final against Spain

of Camp Nou, while Madrid's bid came late and failed. That alone was greeted as a significant Barca victory.

One Catalan daily really drove home the point. The day after the signing was made official, its first seven pages all ran headlines that essentially said the same thing: "Triple goal against Madrid", "Sandro Rosell's success is another defeat for Florentino", and "Rosell whacks one into the top corner of Florentino's net".

Penalty clause

Florentino Perez, the Real Madrid president, admitted defeat and noted that signing Neymar would have cost over €100m; not least because Madrid would have had to pay a long-established penalty clause

> "I don't want to be the one that decides where to play. I will play wherever they want me to play, including in goal if needs be"
>
> Neymar

to enable him to break a deal with Barcelona – money that would have gone to the Catalan club.

There were other reasons to be cheerful. Not only was Neymar widely recognised as one of the most talented players on the planet, he also followed in the footsteps of other illustrious Brazilians at Camp Nou. Romario, Ronaldo, Rivaldo and Ronaldinho had all become arguably the world's best while playing for Barcelona. And, of course, Neymar is a marketing man's dream, already one of the most recognisable athletes in the world.

And yet, the doubts were significant. Some feared frivolity, with the changing haircuts and playfulness putting them on

Support...Messi

guard. There was a question of priorities too, as Barcelona were desperate for a central defender, not a creative player.

Was he really that good, some mused. Could he be a show-reel player, a YouTube footballer, all style and no substance? They recalled both the Olympics and his performance at the Club World Cup against Barcelona, where he was unable to influence the game at all.

The price for a player who had only one year left on his contract struck some as high and the multitude of interested parties in the deal posed questions. There was a fear that his salary might provoke problems within the Barca squad.

Others wondered whether he could make the transition to Europe. They talked of the last superstar to come from Santos...and what, they asked, did Robinho ever truly achieve? It is also true, as some people pointed out, that Barcelona's previous brilliant Brazilians had all benefited from a "soft" European landing. Romario and Ronaldo had played at PSV in Holland, Rivaldo with Deportivo La Coruna and Ronaldinho at Paris Saint-Germain before joining Barca.

They could have also added that with those four it didn't necessarily end well at the Camp Nou, either.

Then there were the doubts about how he would fit into the side – and in particular whether he could play alongside Lionel Messi. The question was posed as a footballing conundrum and a human one too. A question of space, function, qualities and also ego. Two men used to being the star, playing off the top and with freedom to create, to play as they wished. Could they share a pitch and a dressing room?

Among the first to express such

doubts was Johan Cruyff. And although Cruyff's own on-going battles with Rosell mean that everything he says must be read in its political context, he expressed a feeling shared by many when he said "you have to learn from the past" of Barcelona's experience with Messi and Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

Cruyff even ventured: "With Neymar signed, I'd think about selling Messi." He added: "I always try to avoid conflicts and I wouldn't have signed Neymar. If you're the best in the world, like Messi, you have to be a little bit of a dictator."

That Cruyff said so also hints at one of the other reasons why some supporters were worried. Neymar's signing was Rosell's wish and some had begun to lose faith in the president more generally. With Eric Abidal departing and Pep Guardiola gone, with the UNICEF sponsorship ditched for Qatar foundation and last summer's questionable signings, with the huge 7-0 aggregate defeat to Bayern Munich, there was a growing if not entirely articulated sense of Barcelona sliding off track. Analyses

> "A boat can not have two captains"
> Johan Cruyff

of Neymar's arrival were partly conditioned by Rosell's slipping popularity and his confrontation with Cruyff and former president Joan Laporta.

Neymar was swift to allay the fears. His presentation as a Barcelona player was impressive, immediately winning people over. The player turned down the suggestion that it should be a bombastic occasion and sought at every opportunity to project an image of simplicity and humility. He came across as articulate and intelligent, and even delivered a few words in Catalan.

He described the move as a "dream", insisting that he didn't think he was "worth that much" and insisted: "I haven't come here to party."

Standard stuff, perhaps, but it went against the grain and broke with some of the negative – and perhaps always unfair – expectations. And in his efforts to project respect, there was a message. He talked about the talents of Xavi and Andres Iniesta. He was asked again and again about Messi – and every time he chose to place Messi on a pedestal, way above himself. "I am not at Messi's level," he said. "There is no comparison."

Whether forced or truly felt, it was a message that may ease his landing in the dressing room, enhancing that sense that here is someone who is bright and smart, well advised too, and happy to allow others to take the lead, to be taught. "All good people understand each other," Rosell said. "And these two [Messi and Neymar] are good people."

Technical ability

On the face of it, Neymar can fit in the Barcelona structure too. He proved in the Confederations Cup that he is prepared to press as Barcelona demand. A 4-3-3 structure could suit him, with the left wing being his starting point, alongside Messi in the middle, and either Alexis Sanchez or Pedro on the right. There's little doubt that he has the technical ability to fit in. "I'm sure they can play together," said Luis Figo. Guardiola agreed. That they were asked said something about the concerns.

Even if the priority lay elsewhere, Barcelona did indeed need a player to take some of the creative responsibility off Messi. And particularly one who could add velocity, the ability to attack defenders on the outside, shoot from mid-distance and enhance the danger on the break.

Last season's Champions League showed the difficulties inherent in what came to be called "*Messidependencia*". Messi scored 46 league goals last season; an astonishing figure but, as a percentage, a problematic one too. Defenders know they can be drawn to one man without fear. Now, that is less likely to be the case.

All of those factors needed to be reinforced, though. However well Neymar spoke, however well-chosen his words and however much he deferred to Messi, he needed to demonstrate his worth on the pitch. The Confederations Cup did just that and on the best possible stage against the best possible opponent.

A few days later, Neymar played in a charity game with the man who will be his new team-mate, the man he has been determined to prove is not a rival but a *compañero*.

"Neymar is a great player," said Messi. "It is good to have another great player at Barcelona and I am convinced this is the right club for him." WS

Shake on it...new team-mates Neymar and Messi line up for a charity game

BARCELONA'S BRAZILIAN CONNECTION

Neymar is the 24th Brazilian to play for Barcelona.

The first was Lucidio Batista, between 1947 and 1949, and there have been others, such as Henrique and Keirrison (both 2009), who were signed by the club but never played in a competitive match.

In addition, Deco (2004-08) was born in Brazil but adopted Portuguese nationality while playing in Portugal. He is now back in Brazil.

Dani Alves (2009-present) has been the most successful, winning 15 trophies in the past five seasons since a move from Sevilla.

Evaristo (1956-1962) was the first big-name Brazilian to establish himself at the club, scoring the goal that knocked Real Madrid out of the 1960-61 European Cup.

In more recent times, Barcelona has been the European home of World Cup-winners Romario (1993-1995), Ronaldo (1996-1997), Rivaldo (1997-2002) and Ronaldinho (2003-2008).

Major success...Alves

One season...Ronaldo

Back in Brazil...Deco

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The South Pacific nation's own football federation chief believes that international fixtures are a waste of resources

TIM VICKERY
in Rio de Janeiro

Happy Brazil – but only on the pitch

Scolari's side triumph on home soil in the Confederations Cup, but trouble lies ahead

In June 2013, Brazil changed as the world looked on. Millions took to the streets in protest as the country threw off its self-image as a land of passive people, apathetically resigned to inefficient government.

The movement was led by a new generation, emboldened by the recent boom and with enough experience of change in their lifetimes to demand more. It began small, on the issue of public transport in Sao Paulo. With remarkable speed it spread around the country, turning into a generalised grievance about the relationship between the Brazilian state and its citizens. And with president Dilma Rousseff rushed into offering concessions, the movement increasingly focused on at times furious protests about government spending on the 2014 World Cup finals.

In other areas Rousseff had negotiating room – more resources for public transport, health and education, and proposals for a reform process aimed at stiffer punishments for corrupt politicians. But on the 2014 World Cup she had little to offer. The mistakes have been made and the money has been spent. It has been obvious for some time that hosting the World Cup was going to cost Brazilian society more than it should, and give back less. Nothing that will happen in the next few months is likely to change that, and with controversial host cities such as Cuiaba and Manaus also involved in 2014 there is a strong possibility of further protests next year.

There is plenty to protest about. Back in 2007 Brazilian society was told that the money to build stadiums would come from private sources, freeing public money for infrastructure projects. It never looked viable. In the event, almost all the funding for stadium work has been public and many of the infrastructure projects have not made it off the paper.

Proud...the Brazil team and mascots during the national anthem before the Confederations Cup Final in the Maracana

The fact that the stadiums are so impressive only makes things worse. It brought about one of the home-made slogans of the protest movement: if we can have FIFA-standard stadiums, asked the masses, why can't we have FIFA-standard public services?

FIFA also felt the heat, with its relationship with the host nation, and all its tax waivers and concessions, under the microscope like never before. Sepp Blatter weighed into the debate, saying: "I can't understand why, between 2007 and 2013, nothing more has been done in the area of infrastructure." His words worsened an already tense relationship between FIFA and the Brazilian government. In the blame game, both are tempted to play pass the parcel – and who can blame them, if they can hear it ticking?

Volatile times

The situation could have exploded in the face of coach Luiz Felipe Scolari and his Brazil squad during the Confederations Cup. In some of the protests, Neymar's earnings were compared unfavourably with the salary of a schoolteacher. In volatile times, the potential existed for the crowd to turn against the team. Had they lost, especially in the early stages, the reaction might have been interesting.

But not only did Brazil win all their matches, they were never behind. And, starting with the key second game against Mexico, a bond was forged

between team and terraces which gave Scolari's side a big home advantage.

It was symbolised by that moment in Fortaleza – repeated in subsequent games – when the music for the national anthem stopped, and the crowd and players carried on singing. It was emotionally powerful, and – with the exception of a nervous semi-final against Uruguay – it kept helping the hosts to burst quickly out of the blocks.

They did so with the aid of their high-pressure marking – not a traditional arm of a Brazil side, but one introduced by Scolari's predecessor, Mano Menezes, based on the realisation on home soil in 2014 very few sides will open up and play into the hands of one of the world's most potent counter-attacks. Menezes also introduced many of the players to international football and deserves part of the credit for the Confederations Cup win.

> "There was some uncertainty as to what would happen when we realised about this social unrest, but it was an extraordinary competition"
>
> FIFA president Sepp Blatter

There is no doubt, though, that Scolari stamped his identity, with his father-figure charm and his steely "man of destiny" charisma, all over the squad. For two weeks before the tournament the team carried out some intense tactical training, in addition to friendlies against England and France, when their shape began to come together.

The 2-2 draw with England was crucial. Brazil dominated a goalless first half, without creating very much, and at the interval Scolari took a risk, taking off holding midfielder Luiz Gustavo. His side went on to score twice, but also conceded two – both times from the space in front of the centre-backs. Thereafter it was clear in Scolari's mind that Gustavo would play; a line of thought reinforced a week later when his tackle set up the opening goal in a 3-0 friendly win over France – the first time since 2009 that Brazil had beaten top-rank opponents.

Two more Scolari picks also proved

Message ...a protester in Salvador during the Confederations Cup reflects the mood of the Brazilian public

inspired. When his second spell in charge started against England at Wembley back in February, a recall for goalkeeper Julio Cesar was controversial. But he has had an excellent few months with the national team and ended the Confederations Cup with his confidence sky high. Another immediate Scolari change was the re-introduction of a target man centre-forward. Fred appeared from the bench to score at Wembley and has not stopped scoring since.

And the old rule applies: when the collective balance of the side is correct it is easier for the star to shine. From his superb third-minute volley in the opening game against Japan, Neymar had an excellent tournament, scoring four memorable goals and consolidating himself as an international star.

He was also the most fouled player in the competition, with team-mate Oscar not far behind. Brazil's use of tactical fouling was controversial, with Spain coach Vicente Del Bosque grumbling about it after the Final.

Scolari certainly seemed keen for opposing counter-attacks to be stopped at source. Brazil's potency from free-kicks gives players an incentive to dive when close to the opposition box and it is clear that refereeing the hosts' games next year will be no easy task.

BRAZIL 2013: SCOLARI'S KEY MEN

Julio Cesar
Couldn't prevent QPR from being relegated but established himself as his country's first-choice goalkeeper with a string of impressive performances in the Premier League.

David Luiz
A strong central defender who is more than happy to bring the ball out from the back and spray long passes to runners further forward.

Luiz Gustavo
The holding midfielder carries out an important screening job in front of the back line and only Italy defender Giorgio Chiellini won more tackles in the Confederations Cup.

Fred
An old-fashioned, no frills centre-forward whose five goals in Brazil's last three games took his tally for the year so far to nine.

Neymar
Scored four goals and was voted player of the tournament in Brazil. All eyes will now be on Barcelona's new signing to see how he copes with his debut season in Europe.

Expectations raised

But winning the World Cup will be even harder. Indeed, Brazil may have made things tougher for themselves with the conclusive manner of their win over Spain. Nobody will now make the mistake of underestimating the five-times world champions.

And expectations at home have been raised, which could make the crowd more impatient next year during those spells in the game when the side struggle for fluency. How will team and terraces react if Brazil go behind? The template for 2014 may well be closer to the tense semi-final against Uruguay than the victory parade against Spain.

For the moment, though, Scolari can look back with affection on June 2013. It was the month when he sorted out his side, won over the fans all across the country and added another trophy to his CV. Out on the streets, meanwhile, it was the month when Brazilians were making history. WS

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1 **KENNY DALGLISH/LIVERPOOL** THE YEAR THAT SHOOK THE KOP 2 **SPORT CLUB CORINTHIANS PAULISTA** CORINTHIANS DEMOCRACY
3 **GABRIEL BATISTUTA/FIORENTINA** RENAISSANCE SIGHTS 4 **JURGEN KLINSMANN/TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR** KLINSMANN'S DIVING ACADEMY
5 **GIANFRANCO ZOLA/CHELSEA** THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICE 6 **OLE GUNNAR SOLKSJAER/MANCHESTER UTD** BABY-FACED ASSASSIN

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Velez win Superfinal

Newell's win the league but lose title play-off

Beneath the veneer of chaos, there remains a certain logic governing Argentinian football. After all, if the league has already been cut in half to double the number of winners and help clubs of all sizes to claim titles, why not take it one step further and have a third champion?

The 2012-13 season ended with the Superfinal, pitching the two league champions in a one-off game. Why? Nobody really knows. Rather than deciding the league champion using a system similar to that across the water in Uruguay, an additional title was at stake. The winner could then count the title alongside those championships won over the course of a year, stretching back the memory, or over six months. Now it takes just one game to win another trophy. Yet here is the kicker: it is a second title. In just one year, clubs are able to add two championships to their collection.

So it is that Velez have bumped their tally to 10, after an early Lucas Pratto goal proved decisive against Newell's Old Boys in the Superfinal. Ignacio Scocco missed a penalty – his third miss in the final stage of the season betraying what had been a fantastic campaign from the centre-forward, and Newell's could not make numerical advantage count after Fabian Cubero's red card. But with a Libertadores Cup semi-final days after, Newell's had other priorities.

"I don't see the point in the Superfinal," said Newell's coach Gerardo Martino in the build-up. "I don't know of another championship in the world where there are three champions in a year." It is hard to pull him on that particular point.

Velez took the title, as well as the 1.8million peso (£120,000) sweetener, along with qualification for the next Sudamericana Cup and Libertadores Cup. It masked what had been a miserable second half of the season for Ricardo Gareca's side, who ended up 14th in the league table and had lost to Newell's in the Libertadores Cup.

Newell's, meanwhile, were unable to make history and deliver what no other side from the country has achieved: a league and Libertadores Cup double. At one point they were on for the treble, but they lost in the Argentinian Cup shortly after securing the league title.

With a dynamic 4-3-3, Martino's side produced entertaining football – a rare commodity in the domestic game – bringing out the best from veterans, youngsters and journeymen alike. They were the highest-scoring champions since River Plate in 2004.

Defined by coaches

In a season that from the outset looked set to be defined by the coaches, Martino led the pack, even beating the experienced Carlos Bianchi at his own game by knocking Boca Juniors out of the Libertadores Cup on penalties. However, he was unable to emulate Marcelo Bielsa, the coach he played under when Newell's last reached the Libertadores Final, losing to Atletico Mineiro in the semi-finals.

Bianchi's return to Boca Juniors was improbably blighted. After a poor start in the league, the club held onto the hope of a Libertadores run. The sight of Juan Roman Riquelme missing a penalty in the quarter-final shoot-out against Newell's, though scoring his second in sudden death, eloquently illustrated the club's situation. Bianchi no longer "had God's mobile phone number", as the local press liked to say.

In the league, it was Boca's worst campaign in the short-season format. Bianchi's team leaked goals, conceded more penalties than any other side and often ended matches with 10 players. Even Union, who hadn't won in their previous 26 games travelled to the Bombonera and beat Boca, who ended the season 19th. A point against Godoy Cruz, now coached by Boca's all-time top scorer Martin Palermo, saw them avoid 20th place. Clutching at straws, Boca supporters were quick to point out that at least they didn't end last, like River Plate once did.

While Bianchi was back at Boca, so Ramon Diaz had returned to River. But while Diaz kept River within distance of Newell's, they never found rhythm nor a style, and especially not the goals to really push them all the way. River squandered easy points and games, but finishing second was a vast improvement on the club's recent fortunes. It is only a year since River Plate were promoted from the second division.

Despite a pre-season administrative spring clean at the Argentinian Football Association (AFA), the three-year relegation system was maintained. Resisting calls to make the format marginally more rational, the AFA

Triumphant...Superfinal winners Velez

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
Ignacio Scocco (Newell's Old Boys)
The most complete centre-forward in the country led the line to great effect, both domestically and in the Libertadores.

COACH OF THE SEASON
Gerardo Martino (Newell's Old Boys)
Although he was unable to pull off an historic double, the league title was ample reward for a man whose team provided a much-needed antidote to a lacklustre competition.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
Duvan Zapata (Estudiantes)
Despite a discreet season from Estudiantes, their 22-year-old Colombian striker managed an impressive campaign and received interest from English club West Ham United.

Complete...front runner Scocco

eradicated the old system of two direct relegation spots and two play-off spots to simply send three teams straight down.

Independiente followed in River Plate's recent footsteps as one of the country's grandees to be relegated. But it cannot be said that they simply copied River's formula. River went down with an inexperienced first-team coach and a team of youngsters. Independiente brought back Americo Gallego, who won the league at the club in 2002, and also brought in experienced players such as Daniel Montenegro.

Where Independiente's relegation echoed that of River was in the violence. It was not on the day they went down – when there were tears instead of punches at the Estadio Libertadores de America – but rather in the members' meeting the following week. Barely minutes after president Javier Cantero began to speak, chairs flew. A pair of shoes had already been thrown at him from fans packed into the club's indoor football pitch. Cantero and his board were swiftly ushered away, but the television cameras broadcasting the events live had already documented the scenes, which were soon shown around the world.

> "The most motivating factor for me, qualifying to play the Libertadores Cup, is something we've already achieved"
>
> Newell's coach Gerardo Martino is not a fan of the Superfinal

As the end of the season drew near, the prerequisite conspiracy theories did the rounds. But AFA president Julio Grondona did not save the club he grew up supporting – and was president of before taking over the AFA in 1979 – and Argentinos Juniors stayed up despite rumours their president Luis Segura had "swapped" relegation for a powerful position in football's governing body.

Joining Independiente in the second tier next year will be Union, whose form had long condemned them to relegation, and San Martin, who made a brave, last-minute dash to try to stay up but were also unable to survive.

The exodus of players soon began – some clubs releasing up to 20 players from their inflated squads. Argentina's tricky economic relationship with the dollar makes strengthening squads in time for the next season all the more difficult, but of course, if they can, it's worth it. They could add two trophies to the cabinet in just one year.

One player who has already signed up is 38-year-old former international midfielder Juan Sebastian Veron, who has come out of retirement to rejoin Estudiantes for the new season. WS

CAMEROON

MARK GLEESON

Power games

Political squabbling threatens next year's World Cup place

Cameroon have plunged their World Cup qualification hopes into jeopardy in a political power play that has seen the country suspended by FIFA and now scrambling to undo the sanction.

It is the latest instalment in a never-ending saga over control of Cameroon's national team, the iconic "Indomitable Lions", who are well placed to reach yet another finals tournament in Brazil next year.

The team is arguably Cameroon's best-known export and certainly its only real publicity. In most countries, the national side is controlled by the football association, but in Cameroon matters are cloudier.

The football federation in Cameron leans heavily on the government to bankroll its activities, which means the sports minister has an unhealthy influence over the affairs of the Lions. What would be a junior portfolio in most countries is a high-profile post in Cameroon.

Sports ministers, just like coaches, come and go with the fortunes of the team, so they also have to tread carefully, but often the oxygen of publicity pumps many of them up and they seek to become the de-facto controllers of all footballing matters.

In recent years, Cameroon Football Federation presidents, even though still beholden to the state purse, have become more independent in the knowledge that FIFA have largely protected elected officials from government interference. And it is against this backdrop that the latest crisis is played out.

Allegations of theft

Iya Mohamed has been a long-serving leader of the game in Cameroon and seen off one or two ministers in his time. The latest attempt to work him out led to his recent arrest on allegations of theft of public funds from his job in charge of the state cotton producing authority.

But hopes that his absence from the latest elections would lead to his demise at the polls fell flat in an overwhelming 97-1 victory for another term.

This result has since been annulled by a Cameroon court, which was enough provocation for FIFA to suspend the country from competition until the situation is sorted.

FIFA confirmed that government interference was "linked to the occupation of the FECAFOOT headquarters by security forces who unilaterally decided to install one of the parties involved in the contested electoral process."

A statement from Zurich added: "As such, the authorities are clearly interfering with the internal affairs of FECAFOOT in contravention of articles 13 and 17 of the FIFA statutes.

"In addition, the occupation of the FECAFOOT headquarters is yet another example of the long pattern of pressure applied by the authorities since the electoral process started in February 2013 and FIFA already sent in the recent months two correspondences."

The secretary general had been forced out – although since reinstated – and former transport minister John Ndeh has emerged as the rival to Mohamed and the man who has forcibly installed himself as president.

> A draw at home to Libya will put Cameroon in the African play-offs for the World Cup finals

Since the suspension, Cameroon has sent ministers to Zurich to seek a face-saving way out of the crisis.

FIFA might settle on an interim authority to re-structure the federation but run the risk of sending the wrong signal to other countries where similar power struggles are brewing.

There are still some weeks to solve the problem before Cameroon's decisive qualifier in September, when a draw at home against Libya would be enough to see them into the African play-offs.

In the interim, qualifying games in the African Nations Championship are on hold, as is the participation of Coton Sport in the Champions League.

Strictly speaking, both should have been disqualified and their opponents given walkovers...but the Confederation of African football's president Issa Hayatou is from Cameroon. WS

Up in the air...the continued participation of Stephane Mbia (centre) and Cameroon in the 2014 World Cup depends on FIFA lifting the country's suspension

STEVE MENARY

"Internationals are a waste"

Samoa's own football chief can see no point in playing games against other nations

There aren't many countries in the world where the head of the local football federation would describe international matches as a "waste" but, stranded in the South Pacific, Samoa is one of them.

"Senior level football on an international level is very poor in Samoa," says Sarai Barema, chief executive officer at the Football Federation Samoa (FFS). "It is a waste of resources in terms of air fares and preparation costs."

Samoa does not even have a national coach, after Malo Vaga stood down at the end of last year's OFC Nations Cup, in which his side conceded 24 goals as they lost to Tahiti, Vanuatu and New Caledonia in the Solomon Islands.

After being suspended by FIFA in 2008 for mismanagement, just qualifying for that tournament – ahead of American Samoa, Cook Islands and Tonga – was an achievement, but Silao Malo's goal in the opening 10-1 thrashing by Tahiti was his side's only one in the finals.

Colin Tuaa, who was the first footballer of Samoan heritage to be capped by New Zealand, says: "It was a good achievement considering they hadn't played international football for a few years, but the step up in intensity and level of football was too much. There is also a lack of coaching experience at international level.

"There is potential to improve Samoan football. Out of the Polynesian countries they have the ability to close the gap with the leading Pacific nations. When you think that there is a large Samoan population in New Zealand, and it is growing in Australia, there are good opportunities.

"The biggest challenge is having the leadership, vision and football expertise to lead the development."

Busy...Samoa goalkeeper Motu Hafoka was beaten 10 times by Tahiti (in red) in the 2012 OFC Nations Cup

> "Senior level football on an international level is very poor in Samoa. It is a waste of resources in terms of air fares and preparation costs"
>
> Sarai Barema, Football Federation Samoa's chief executive officer

National league

The season in Samoa runs from September to May, but there are just four full-sized pitches at the FFS Complex in Tuanaimato on the main island of Upolu and one other in Savai'i. This season the nine teams in Savai'i joined Upolu's 25 sides in an enlarged national league. Last season's champions were Lupe Ole Soaga.

"Samoan football players are not a priority for NZ clubs," continues Tuaa, who after retiring moved into coaching and championed the cause of Samoan players, helping Junior Michael join Nelson Suburbs, Andrew Setefano move to Upper Hutt and Desmond Fa'aiuaso sign for Young Heart Manawatu.

Fa'aiuaso also played professionally in Tahiti for Pirae and his career illustrates the power both codes of rugby have over Samoan sportsmen.

In the 2004 Olympic qualifiers, Samoa beat the Solomon Islands and drew with Papua New Guinea and Fa'aiuaso was voted best island player. Months later, Samoa contested the Oceania qualifiers for the 2006 World Cup, but a swathe of players including Fa'aiuaso, goalkeeper Ted Losi and centre-half Lolo Lui had quit football to play professionally for Samoa on the rugby union sevens circuit.

David Brand, the Englishman who was coach of Samoa's national football side at the time, says: "Professional rugby provides an opportunity for young players to earn a good living if identified for contracts overseas. All our boys then were good at sevens and the skills taught in football helped."

Setefano stuck with football and played professionally for Hekari in Papua New Guinea before recently returning to Upper Hutt. Samoa's captain at last year's OFC Nations Cup finals, he believes the FFS focus on youth development over senior games is the future.

"We're doing some programmes for the kids – not only in schools but villages – to develop the game," says Setefano.

"I believe that will be a big step up for the game in our beloved island." WS

WHERE IN THE WORLD?

Formerly a German then New Zealand protectorate, in 1962 Samoa became the first Polynesian nation to regain independence

Size 1,092 sq m
Population 195,476
Capital Apia
Language Samoan and English
Religion Christian

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Close-run thing...Chelsea's Ramires (left) and Gareth Barry of Manchester City are set to clash again in the new Premier League season

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AUSTRIA: BUNDESLIGA

Tough times ahead for Rapid

KEY DATES

Season starts
July 20, 2013

Season ends
May 11, 2014

They may be the country's most successful club side of all time – having won 32 league titles – but Rapid Vienna look set for another long, hard season after the club's board of directors admitted they could not afford any new signings this summer.

Financial difficulties mean the club must now manage the forthcoming campaign on a budget of less than £17million, with the media claiming that they will face a shortfall of around £3.41m after a number of sponsors ended their partnerships, including mobile phone company Orange. The club must also keep paying former coach Peter Schottel's wages for another two years because his contract was extended shortly before he was sacked last season.

Rapid last won the title in 2008 and since then they have managed two runners-up spots, two third places and one fifth. They eventually scrambled home in third last term after a season in which fan protests were a common sight. Zoran Barisic, who took over for the final third of the campaign following Schottel's dismissal, now finds himself in charge of a squad whose average age is under 24.

"We have faith in our squad to face this new challenge and develop," says club sporting director Helmut Schulte.

"The performances of the young players in training make us hopeful. We still have enough money to give the fans some fun. We are going to try to qualify for Europe, but we have to imagine that there will be some setbacks."

To make things even harder, five of Rapid's more experienced players – Markus Heikkinen, Markus Katzer, Gerson, Stefan Kulovits and Thomas Prager – have departed, while Deni Alar and Dominik Starkl have long-term injuries.

The Austrian Bundesliga has not been represented in the Champions League group stage since Rapid Vienna got there in 2005, and for Austria Vienna and Salzburg the qualifiers for this year's group phase will be the most important games of the season for both clubs.

Pressure...Barisic took over at Rapid last season and has to work with a young squad

As far as Salzburg are concerned, reaching the group stage has turned into a Kafkaesque nightmare. Despite dominating domestically with four titles since Red Bull bought the club in 2005, their stated aim of Champions League football has repeatedly eluded them.

Having lost to Valencia, Shakhtar Donetsk, Maccabi Haifa and Hapoel Tel Aviv in the past, their list of failures culminated in a humiliating second-qualifying-round defeat against Luxembourg's Dudelange one year ago.

And matters aren't helped this time for Salzburg as they enter the third qualifying round in the non-champions half of the draw after finishing as runners-up domestically last time out.

Having chopped and changed their policies over the last few years – alternately favouring young Austrian talent, experienced Austrians, young foreigners and then expensive imports – Salzburg are once again focusing on youth, with 19-year-old Peruvian forward Yordy Reyna an interesting signing from Alianza Lima.

Peter Stoger, who led Austria Vienna to the title last term, left to join Cologne in the German second division and he has been replaced by Nenad Bjelica, a former Croatia midfielder who led Wolfsberger to a respectable fifth place on their top-flight debut last season. Bjelica's place in the dugout at Wolfsberger was taken by his former assistant and compatriot Slobodan Grubor.

> "My goal has always been to train a Bundesliga club, it is where I belong"
>
> New Admira coach Toni Polster

Meanwhile, Slovenia's Darko Milanic – who is the most successful coach in his home league's history with four titles in five seasons as coach of Maribor – was handed the reigns at Sturm Graz, where he had been a player.

One of the most interesting summer appointments was that of Toni Polster at Admira. The 49-year-old, who scored a record 44 goals for the national side, will be coaching a top-flight team for the first time, having obtained his licence two years ago. He has previously been marketing director for Borussia Monchengladbach, team manager at Austria Vienna and adviser to LASK Linz, with his only experiences as a coach being at lower-league Wiener Viktoria and LASK Linz's amateur team in the fourth tier.

Admira escaped relegation by the skin of their teeth last season, only finishing above Mattersberg on goal difference.

Brian Homewood

• *For all this season's Austrian Bundesliga fixtures, go to www.worldsoccer.com/world-service*

Holders...Bjelica joined Austria Vienna

AUSTRIAN BUNDESLIGA CLUBS 2013-14

1 Admira
2 Austria Vienna
Rapid Vienna
3 Grodig
4 Ried
5 Salzburg
6 Sturm Graz
7 Wacker Innsbruck
8 Wiener Neustadt
9 Wolfsberger

BELGIUM: PRO LEAGUE

Youth to get its chance

KEY DATES
Season starts
July 26, 2013
Season ends
May 2014

The new season could be one in which young players get a chance to shine at Belgium's top clubs. Several experienced players left Anderlecht in the summer, while Club Brugge have signed some youngsters with one eye on the Financial Fairplay rules. In addition, Standard Liege and Genk have already given some of their young talent playing time and hope their academies bear even more fruit in the near future.

Reigning champions Anderlecht lost captain Lucas Biglia to Lazio, and strikers Dieumerci Mbokani and Tom De Sutter to Dynamo Kiev and Club Brugge respectively, while also calling time on veterans Milan Jovanovic and Marcin Wasilewski. Nineteen-year-old Dennis Praet has been handed the No 10 shirt, while another teenage midfielder, Federico Vico, has been signed from Spanish second division club Cordoba and he has been a regular for Spain's under-19 and under-20 sides. Anthony Vanden Borre also joins, from Ukraine's Tavriya Simferopol.

The management at Club Brugge want to build a side that gets back to the club's core values of hard work and never-say-die attitude. To ensure that these ethics prevail, they have re-signed veteran Timmy Simons from Nuremberg. He should prove a valuable leader for the likes of 21-year-old Maxime Lestienne, who was called up to the national side last season. Australian keeper Matt Ryan (21), Greek midfielder Spyridon Fourlanos (19) and Portuguese defender Elton Monteiro (19) have also been brought in.

Valuable experience...Simons

Welcome to Anderlecht...coach Van den Brom is flanked by new signings Vanden Borre (left) and Vico

Genk have extended Dutch coach Mario Been's contract to 2016 and he will he looking for progress from a couple of 19 year-olds: Dutch defender Sandy Walsh and winger Jordy Croux. The big hope, however, is 17-year-old Siebe Schrijvers, who has been a prolific scorer in the junior teams and a regular for the Belgium under-17s.

State of flux

As usual, Standard Liege are in a state of flux. President Roland Duchatelet sacked popular coach Mircea Rednic after European qualification had been secured in May – an action that resulted in a series of demonstrations by fans, which included stadium break-ins during meetings with sponsors. Duchatelet said he'd had enough and threatened to sell the club, but since then has signed national team forward Igor De Camargo on a substantial salary and given improved contracts to key players such as 19-year-old strikers Michy Batshuayi and Imoh Ezekiel, and French midfielder William Vainqueur.

The other member of the "big five", ambitious Gent, will play in a new stadium this season but it is difficult to see them achieving their aim of qualifying for Europe. They have also rejected two bids, so far, from Juventus for Belgium under-17 winger Jinty Caenepeel.

At one point, it looked as though last season's runners-up Zulte Waregem could be decimated by players heading for pastures new, but they had some good news with the return of Thorgan Hazard on loan from Chelsea.

Remarkably, Beveren have signed 16 new players, with 15 being allowed to leave. Newly promoted Oostende are short of money and experience, and will start favourites for a quick return.

John Chapman

• *For all this season's Pro League fixtures, go to www.worldsoccer.com/world-service*

PRO LEAGUE CLUBS 2013-14

1 Anderlecht
2 Cercle Brugge
Club Brugge
3 Charleroi
4 Genk
5 Gent
6 Kortrijk
7 Lierse
8 Lokeren
9 Mechelen
10 Mons
11 Oostende
12 OH Leuven
13 Standard Liege
14 Waasland-Beveren
15 Zulte Waregem

BULGARIA: A PFG

CSKA in total chaos

Protest...CSKA supporters attacked the headquarters of the BFU in June, smashing windows and throwing incendiary devices

KEY DATES

Season starts
July 20, 2013

Season ends
May 15, 2014

The future of CSKA Sofia – the most successful Bulgarian club of all time with 31 league titles – hangs in the balance. Having declared themselves bankrupt, the team which last won the title in 2008 could yet find themselves playing in the regional amateur ranks if the country's football federation (BFU) does not grant them a licence for the new season.

Attempts to merge CSKA with another club to carry on in a different guise next term appear dead in the water after an approach to Litex Lovech owner Grisha Ganchev was rejected.

Club legend Hristo Stoichkov returned as coach in June, but he quit after just 25 days in charge, having said: "I don't want to take part in the obliteration of the CSKA history. I don't want to be a liquidator of my team."

Some of the players and most of the staff have gone without wages for six months, and Martin Kamburov, Spas Delev, Mihail Venkov, Apostol Popov, Kostadin Stoyanov, Ivan Bandalovski, Serginho and Serge Nyuiadzi are among those to be released.

Last season's third-place finish earned CSKA a place in the first qualifying round of the Europa League, but just three hours before the draw was made they withdrew for "financial reasons". BFU president Borislav Mihailov said: "The refusal of CSKA [to enter] the Europa League is an absolute shock to the reputation of Bulgarian football."

> "Lies cannot be endless and we cannot go forward. Or at least I can not do so"
>
> Hristo Stoichkov quit as CSKA coach

CSKA's place was taken by Botev Plovdiv, who strengthened their squad by signing Slovenian defender Elvedin Dzinic from Belgium's Charleroi. He joins other new faces Valeri Domovchiyski, from Duisburg of Germany, and Dutch striker Romario Kortzorg.

Ludogorets will go in search of a third consecutive title, but must do so without Emil Gargorov, Stanislav Genchev, Uros Golubovic and Lubomir Guldan as their contracts all expired in the summer. To replace them, coach Ivaylo Petev brought in Brazilian striker Michel Platini from CSKA, Portuguese midfield Fabio Espinho from Moreirense, Spanish winger Daniel Abalo from Celta Vigo and midfielder Hristo Zlatinski from Lokomotiv Plovdiv.

Last season's runners-up Levski Sofia will celebrate their centenary next May and Nasko Sirakov, who returns to the club as sporting director, says: "I will change a lot of things, especially the way of thinking and behaviour of the players."

And Sirakov wasted no time in sacking coach Nikolay Mitov eight days before the start of the season after the team were knocked out of the Europa League, in the first qualifying round, by Irtysh Pavlodar of Kazakhstan.

Litex Lovech brought Bosnia full-back Dzemal Berberovic back from Duisburg in Germany and sold 2012's player of the year, Georgi Milanov, to CSKA Moscow for €2.7million.

The biggest change this term, however, is in the league's structure. The 14 top-flight teams will play each other twice and then separate into two groups of seven; one group will play for the title, the the other will decide relegation. At the end of the season, four teams will go down, with just two coming up, as the league is cut to 12 teams from the 2014-15 season.

Rumen Paytashev

Return...Berberovic is back in Lovech

• *For all this season's A PFG fixtures, go to www.worldsoccer.com/world-service*

A PFG CLUBS 2013-14

1 Beroe
2 Botev Plovdiv
Lokomotiv Plovdiv
3 Cherno More
4 Chernomorets
Neftochimic
5 CSKA Sofia
Levski Sofia
Lokomotiv Sofia
Slavia Sofia
6 Litex Lovech
7 Ludogorets
8 Lyubimets
9 Pirin

CZECH REPUBLIC: LIGA 1

Plzen look to build dynasty

KEY DATES

Season starts
July 20, 2013

Season ends
May 30, 2014

Staying put...Horvath (left) and Davida look set to stay with Plzen this season as the champions set about defending their title

Having won two of the last three league campaigns, and launched impressive European campaigns in each of the last two seasons, Pavel Vrba's once-unfashionable Viktoria Plzen show no signs of fading away.

Already blessed with an array of Czech internationals, they have been boosted this term by the return of winger Milan Petrzela, after an unsuccessful year with Augsburg in Germany, and the signing of midfielder Tomas Horava from Sigma Olomouc. While Plzen aren't the league's richest club, the purchase of Horava – along with forward Stanislav Tecl and midfielder Jan Kovarik last season – proves Plzen owner Tomas Paclik isn't afraid to invest his club's European earnings in the squad

With David Limbersky, Frantisek Rajtoral, Vladimir Darida, Daniel Kolar and 38-year-old playmaker Pavel Horvath all on board for another season, coach Vrba has the luxury of loaning out young talent such as David Stipek, who will be joining Mlada Boleslav. The only notable departure is likely to be midfielder Martin Fillo, who had a pre-season trial with English third-tier side Brentford.

Having pushed Plzen for the title until the final day of last season, Sparta Prague will again be their biggest rivals.

Talented...Jablonec defender Benes

Historically the country's most successful club, Sparta are trophy-less since a Czech Super Cup win in 2010 and the pressure to deliver silverware remains intense. As part of the rebuilding phase, a clear-out of older players continued with the departure of defender Jiri Jarosik, although creative midfielder Marek Matejovsky is set to stay for at least one more season.

Sparta's most notable summer signing was midfielder Kamil Vacek, who returns on loan from Chievo, with Manuel Pamic set to move to Italy. Other new faces in Vitezslav Lavicka's squad include Zimbabwean left-back Costa Nhamoinesu from Poland's Zaglebie Lubin and Slovak right-back Lukas Pauschek from Slovan Bratislava. Cameroonian striker Leonard Kweuke's future at the club looks doubtful, while highly rated forward Vaclav Kadlec is wanted by Eintracht Frankfurt.

Liberec weakened

Champions in 2012, Slovan Liberec were the form team in the second half of last season, but they have been severely weakened by the unexpected departure of veteran playmaker Jiri Stajner to Mlada Boleslav. Adding to coach Jaroslav Silhavy's worries, defender Ondrej Kusnir has been linked with German side Cologne and forward Michael Rabusic could yet join Plzen.

Roman Skuhravy led Jablonec to victory in the Czech Cup last term and won his second trophy in only eight matches as their coach with a 3-2 victory over Plzen in the Czech Super Cup. He has a settled squad, with talented youngsters in defender Vit Benes and midfielders Jan Kopic and Filip Novak.

Despite the league's lowest average attendance (2,191) and a squad largely made up of youngsters and journeymen, Lubos Kozel did well as coach of Dukla Prague last term and is attracting the attention of Slavia Prague. Goalkeeper Radek Cerny, who is now 39, could rejoin Slavia after being released by English side QPR.

Of the promoted sides, Bohemians 1905 seem the most likely to avoid a swift return, despite finishing behind Znojmo in the second tier. Defensive midfielder Radek Sirl should boost their chances of survival after rejoining his former club on loan from Plzen. Znojmo, who will begin the season playing in Brno, are hoping 35-year-old former international forward Marek Heinz will rediscover his scoring touch.

Sam Beckwith

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LIGA 1 CLUBS 2013-24

1 Banik Ostrava
2 Bohemians 1905
Dukla Prague
Slavia Prague
Sparta Prague
3 Jablonec
4 Mlada Boleslav
5 Pribram
6 Sigma Olomouc
7 Slovacko
8 Slovan Liberec
9 Teplice
10 Viktoria Plzen
11 Vysocina Jihlava
12 Zbrojovka Brno
13 Znojmo

DENMARK: SUPERLIGA

Young local talent still in demand

Gone...Cornelius left Copenhagen for Premier League newcomers Cardiff City

KEY DATES

Season starts
July 19, 2013

Season ends
May 17, 2014

A heavy cloud hangs over Danish football after the worst result and performance in the history of one of the game's oldest national teams. A shocking 4-0 home defeat to Armenia all but destroyed Denmark's hopes of qualifying for next year's World Cup and left longest-serving coach Morten Olsen facing a barrage of criticism. How could the successors to the "Danish Dynamite" team and the 1992 European Championship victors fall so low? Four days previously, Armenia themselves had lost 1-0 at home to Malta.

Olsen accepted responsibility, declining to extend any blame towards the mostly young players in his side. Yet, however horrendous the result was, it did not deter clubs from England raiding across the North Sea for emerging Danish talent.

Within weeks of the loss to Armenia, the Superliga had lost its three brightest young players: Andreas Cornelius, Jores Okore and Nicklas Helenius.

The loss of Cornelius, a bustling 20-year-old striker who scored 18 goals in 34 league games during his first season at the top level and broke into the national side, will be most keenly felt. He left reigning champions Copenhagen to join Cardiff City for £8.5million.

Such a windfall can only cement the financial domination of Copenhagen, who will almost certainly use the cash to pluck the best talent from their domestic rivals. The recall of winger Youssef Toutouh, who had impressed on loan last season at Danish Cup winners Esbjerg, was the first move by Belgian coach Ariel Jacobs, whose side are overwhelming favourites to claim a 10th title in 14 seasons. A repeat of the 2010-11 season when they won the league with a record 81 points is certainly not unthinkable.

The only club with a chance to mount a challenge is likely to be Nordsjaelland, who won the title two seasons ago and were runners-up last time – and they also have money to spend after the sale of Okore to Aston Villa for a club record £4m. The 20-year-old defender had been at the heart of Nordsjaelland's success in the past two seasons and he will be sorely missed by coach Kasper Hjulmand, despite the continued presence of fellow international defender Nikolai Stokholm.

Hjulmand's first acquisition of the summer was somewhat low-key considering he has funds to play with, signing 19-year-old striker Bassel Jradi from lower-league club AB.

The third major exit from the Superliga was Helenius, the Superliga's second-top goalscorer last season behind Cornelius, and he was also seduced by a switch to Aston Villa. He earned a transfer fee of £1.5m for his club Aab, who are coached by former Villa defender Kent Nielsen. Although hugely consistent, and champions three times in the last 20 years, it is, however, almost impossible to make a case for Aab this time.

For the rest of the 12-strong Superliga, this season will once again be all about avoiding relegation rather than challenging the might of Copenhagen.

> "Winning championships is something you never get tired of, something you never grow too old for"
> Copenhagen captain Lars Jacobsen

Once upon a time Brondby were serious city rivals, but now they battle merely to survive. After a final-day victory kept them up a couple of months ago they launched a major clear-out of players, including veteran winger Dennis Rommedahl, who left for RKC Waalwijk in Holland.

Favourites for relegation and an instant return to the second tier are Vestsjaelland, who are coached by Ove Pedersen. He has snapped up former Denmark winger Dennis Sorensen and 25-year-old left-back Michael Lumb, from German sides Energie Cottbus and Bochum respectively.

Staying put...Nordsjaelland's Stokholm

Jim Holden

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SUPERLIGA CLUBS 2013-14

1 AaB
2 AGF
3 Brondby
4 Copenhagen
5 Esbjerg
6 Midtjylland
7 Nordsjaelland
8 OB
9 Randers
10 SonderjyskE
11 Vestsjaelland
12 Viborg

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ENGLAND: PREMIER LEAGUE

All change at the top

KEY DATES

Season starts
August 17, 2013
Season ends
May 11, 2014

New man...Manchester United manager Moyes has a hard act to follow after replacing Ferguson in the hot seat at Old Trafford

For the first time in living memory, England's top three clubs all start the season with a new manager. David Moyes succeeds Alex Ferguson at the champions, Manchester United; across town, Manuel Pellegrini replaces the sacked Roberto Mancini at Manchester City; and Jose Mourinho returns to Chelsea.

The last time the English top flight underwent such significant managerial change was almost four decades ago, in the summer of 1974. Back then, Don Revie left champions Leeds United for the England job, to be replaced by Brian Clough, albeit only for 44 days, while Bill Shankly retired from FA Cup-winners Liverpool. Manchester United, meanwhile, were preparing for their first and only post-war season in the second tier.

None of this season's new managers are likely to have anything near the influence exercised by Ferguson at United, or indeed Revie or Clough, but this summer's changes make for an unpredictable season ahead.

At Old Trafford, Moyes faces the unenviable task of moulding a team in his own image. The club's owners, the reclusive Glazer family, will have been impressed by his frugal transfer dealings at Everton, but money is available to buy a creative midfielder.

Over at City, Pellegrini's influence is clear with his new signings. The Chilean's record in European competition, particularly with Villarreal and Malaga, suggests City will give a better account of themselves in the Champions League this season.

Mourinho was very keen to portray a more humble side to his character in his first press conference back at Chelsea, even attempting to feed a new line to the media by claiming: "I'm the happy one." The dynamics of the Premier League have changed considerably since he left Stamford Bridge in October 2007, not least because of City's emergence as the dominant power and the realities of Financial Fairplay, but Chelsea will be expected to compete for honours at home and in Europe.

Arsenal are much harder to predict, thanks to a lack of transfer activity, though there have been signs of a big-name signing – with Gonzalo Higuain, Wayne Rooney and Luis Suarez all mooted.

Mini-league contests

Tottenham Hotspur and Liverpool can also be expected to challenge for the European places, but below them the league remains open. In previous seasons, the division has divided into mini-league contests, but there is a danger this year of two tiers developing: the top six and the rest.

The success of the likes of Swansea City and West Bromwich Albion has shown how promoted teams can adapt successfully to life in the top flight. Southampton and West Ham United survived with relative ease last season, with more established clubs such as Aston Villa, Newcastle United and Sunderland flirting with the relegation places.

Despite the financial pulling power of the Premier League, a number of potential star signings rejected England in favour of France and Germany, forcing clubs to scout more resourcefully. The approach has been more Moneyball than moneybags.

Serious money has still been spent – Andreas Cornelius (Cardiff, £8million), Ricky Van Wolfswinkel (Norwich, £8.7m), Victor Wanyama (Southampton, £12.5m) and Wilfried Bony (Swansea City, £11m) – but the emphasis has been on players with sell-on value.

The league champions will come from a select group, and the days of a Clough or Revie leading a side from the second tier to the title are long gone. But there may still be a few surprises in store.

Gavin Hamilton

• *For all this season's Premier League fixtures, go to www.worldsoccer.com/world-service*

PREMIER LEAGUE 2013-14

1 Arsenal
Chelsea
Crystal Palace
Fulham
Tottenham Hotspur
West Ham United
2 Aston Villa
3 Cardiff City
4 Everton
Liverpool
5 Hull City
6 Manchester City
Manchester United
7 Newcastle United
8 Norwich City
9 Southampton
10 Stoke City
11 Sunderland
12 Swansea City
13 West Bromwich Albion

ENGLAND: PREMIER LEAGUE

Team-by-team guide to the season

Stylish...Martinez's brand of football will no doubt please supporters at Goodison Park

ARSENAL

Manager Arsene Wenger
Key arrivals Yaya Sanogo (Auxerre, Fra)
Key departures Andrei Arshavin (Zenit, Rus), Francis Coquelin (Freiburg, Ger, on loan), Johan Djourou (Hamburg, Ger, on loan), Vito Mannone (Sunderland), Sebastian Squillaci (released)
In excellent form in the second half of last season, but have so far resisted any big-money signings, despite having money to spend.

ASTON VILLA

Manager Paul Lambert
Key arrivals Leandro Bacuna (Groningen, Hol), Nicklas Helenius (Aalborg, Den), Antonio Luna (Sevilla, Spa), Jores Okore (Nordsjaelland, Den), Jed Steer (Norwich City), Aleksandar Tonev (Lech Poznan, Pol)
Key departures Richard Dunne (QPR), Jean Makoun (Rennes, Fra)
Last season's gamble on youth paid off and there has been plenty of activity in the transfer market this summer with the emphasis on more young talent. However, the loss of striker Christian Benteke would be a big blow if he moves.

CARDIFF CITY

Manager Malky Mackay
Key arrivals Andreas Cornelius (Copenhagen, Den)
Key departures Heidar Helguson (retired), Stephen McPhail (released)
Last season's second-tier champions have spent heavily on Cornelius, but they still look short on quality, despite the presence of Craig Bellamy. Their title was based on a tight defence that will be tested to the limits this season.

CHELSEA

Manager Jose Mourinho
Key arrivals Marco Van Ginkel (Vitesse, Hol), Andre Schurrle (Bayer Leverkusen, Ger), Mark Schwarzer (Fulham)
Key departures Yossi Benayoun (released), Paulo Ferreira (retired), Florent Malouda (Trabzonspor, Tur), Marko Marin (Sevilla, Spa, on loan), Oriol Romeu (Valencia, Spa, on loan), Patrick Van Aanholt (Vitesse, Hol, on loan)
Mourinho's return has raised expectations and a stronger challenge to the Manchester clubs is expected. However, outbid by PSG for Edinson Cavani and knocked back by United over Wayne Rooney, they are still seeking reinforcements. Expect a big signing before deadline day.

CRYSTAL PALACE

Manager Ian Holloway
Key arrivals Jose Campana (Sevilla, Spa), Stephen Dobbie (Brighton & Hove Albion), Dwight Gayle (Peterborough United), Jerome Thomas (West Brom)
Key departures Jermaine Easter (Millwall), Andre Moritz (released), Wilfred Zaha (Manchester United)
The Championship play-off winners have been written off before the season even starts after selling Zaha and losing top scorer Glenn Murray to long-term injury. However, Holloway's teams have surprised in the past and the signing of Spain's Under-20 captain Campana is intriguing.

EVERTON

Manager Roberto Martinez
Key arrivals Antolin Alcaraz (Wigan Athletic), Gerard Deulofeu (Barcelona, on loan), Arouna Kone (Wigan Athletic), Joel Robles (Wigan Athletic)
Key departures Thomas Hitzlsperger (released), Phil Neville (retired)
All change at Goodison with the departure of the long-serving David Moyes to Manchester United and the arrival of Martinez from Wigan. The Spaniard's style of football will please fans but he faces a battle to keep Leighton Baines and Marouane Fellaini.

FULHAM

Manager Martin Jol
Key arrivals Fernando Amorebieta (Athletic Bilbao, Spa), Derek Boateng (Dnipro, Ukr), Sascha Riether (Cologne, Ger), Maarten Stekelenburg (Roma, Ita)
Key departures Chris Baird (released), Dan Burn (Birmingham City, on loan), Simon Davies (released), Mark Schwarzer (Chelsea)
There is a new owner at Craven Cottage as US billionaire Shahid Khan replaces Mohamed Al Fayed, who has sold up after 16 years.

Experience...Toure has joined Liverpool

This summer's signings look useful without being inspired, but the spark, if it comes, will continue to be provided by Dimitar Berbatov and Bryan Ruiz.

HULL CITY

Manager Steve Bruce
Key arrivals George Boyd (Peterborough United), Curtis Davies (Birmingham City), Ahmed Elmohamady (Sunderland), Maynor Figueroa (Wigan Athletic), Steve Harper (Newcastle United), Allan McGregor (Besiktas, Tur)
Key departures none
Promoted from the Championship in second place behind Cardiff, Hull have an experienced campaigner in Bruce but they need a good start to avoid being dragged into a relegation fight.

LIVERPOOL

Manager Brendan Rodgers
Key arrivals Luis Alberto (Sevilla, Spa), Iago Aspas (Celta Vigo, Spa), Simon Mignolet (Sunderland), Kolo Toure (Manchester City)
Key departures Jamie Carragher (retired), Andy Carroll (West Ham United), Jonjo Shelvey (Swansea City), Suso (Almeria, Spa, on loan), Danny Wilson (Hearts, Sco)
A productive summer in the transfer market as Rodgers continues to rebuild the club, with exciting youngsters playing attractive, attacking football. But the good work could all be for nothing if Luis Suarez departs.

MANCHESTER CITY

Manager Manuel Pellegrini
Key arrivals Fernandinho (Shakhtar Donetsk, Ukr), Jesus Navas (Sevilla, Spa), Alvaro Negredo (Sevilla, Spa)
Key departures Wayne Bridge (Reading), Carlos Tevez (Juventus, Ita), Kolo Toure (Liverpool), Roque Santa Cruz (Malaga, Spa)
Despite second place and a Cup Final, last season was a missed opportunity to push on, and Roberto Mancini paid the price. Pellegrini likes his teams to attack, and Fernandinho, Negredo and Navas look exciting, if expensive, additions. European progress is expected, as well as a title challenge.

MANCHESTER UNITED

Manager David Moyes
Key arrivals Guillermo Varela (Penarol, Uru), Wilfred Zaha (Crystal Palace)
Key departures none
United start a season without Alex Ferguson for the first time in 27 years but the signs are that Moyes will be given time to build his own side. His low-key transfer dealings at Everton will have appealed to the United hierarchy but money must be spent to give United more creativity in midfield. Wayne Rooney's future is still unclear.

NEWCASTLE UNITED

Manager Alan Pardew
Key arrivals Olivier Kemen (Metz, Fra)
Key departures Steve Harper (Hull City), James Perch (Wigan Athletic), Danny Simpson (QPR)
A peculiar summer on Tyneside, with club owner Mike Ashley ridiculed for the appointment of "old school" manager Joe Kinnear as director of football. Relations between Ashley and Pardew appear strained and a continuation of last season's poor form is a strong possibility.

NORWICH CITY

Manager Chris Hughton
Key arrivals Leroy Fer (Twente, Hol), Javier Garrido (Lazio, Ita), Carlo Nash (Stoke City), Martin Olsson (Blackburn Rovers), Nathan Redmond (Birmingham City), Ricky Van Wolfswinkel (Sporting Lisbon, Por)
Key departures Grant Holt (Wigan Athletic), Jed Steer (Aston Villa), James Vaughan (Huddersfield Town)
Van Wolfswinkel arrives as a club record signing at £8.5m with a brief to supply the goals that were lacking last season. Club hero Holt has left but Norwich look to have enough to survive.

Record signing...Van Wolfswinkel

SOUTHAMPTON

Manager Mauricio Pochettino
Key arrivals Dejan Lovren (Lyon, Fra), Victor Wanyama (Celtic, Sco)
Key departures none
The brutal mid-season sacking of Nigel Adkins surprised many last season, but Pochettino kept Southampton up. The new signings, especially the highly rated Wanyama, should help the consolidation process.

New era...sacked by QPR last season, can Hughes do better this time at Stoke?

STOKE CITY

Manager Mark Hughes
Key arrivals Marc Muniesa (Barcelona, Spa), Erik Pieters (PSV, Hol)
Key departures Rory Delap (released), Michael Owen (retired), Mamady Sidibe (released), Matthew Upson (Brighton & Hove Albion), Dean Whitehead (Middlesbrough)
A new era begins under Hughes and Stoke fans hope that he can introduce a new playing style without jeopardising the results that, under Tony Pulis, kept Stoke up. Could be a struggle.

SUNDERLAND

Manager Paolo Di Canio
Key arrivals Jozy Altidore (AZ, Hol), El Hadji Ba (Le Havre, Fra), Cabral (Basle, Swi), Modibo Diakite (Lazio, Ita), Emanuele Giaccherini (Juventus, Ita), David Moberg Karlsson (Gothenburg, Swe), Vito Mannone (Arsenal), Valentin Roberge (Maritimo, Por), Duncan Watmore (Altrincham)
Key departures Titus Bramble (released), Ahmed Elmohamady (Hull City), Matthew Kilgallon (Blackburn Rovers), Simon Mignolet (Liverpool)
Could be a bumpy ride, with plenty of new arrivals, of which few are well-known, and a manager with little top-flight experience.

SWANSEA CITY

Manager Michael Laudrup
Key arrivals Jordi Amat (Espanyol, Spa), Wilfried Bony (Vitesse, Hol), Jose Canas (Real Betis, Spa), Jonathan De Guzman (Villarreal, Spa, on loan), Alex Gogic (Olympiakos, Gre), Alejandro Pozuelo (Real Betis, Spa), Jonjo Shelvey (Liverpool), Gregor Zabret (Domzale, Sln)
Key departures Kyle Bartley (Birmingham City, on loan), David Cornell (St Mirren, Sco, on loan), Gwion Edwards (St Johnstone, Sco, on loan)
A summer of discontent off the pitch, with Laudrup's agent Bayram Tutumlu banned by the club after reportedly trying to do deals behind their back. The club transfer record was smashed to sign £12m Bony.

TOTTENHAM H'SPUR

Manager Andre Villas-Boas
Key arrivals Paulinho (Corinthians, Bra)
Key departures David Bentley (released), William Gallas (released)
Paulinho was expensive at £17m, but he excelled at the Confed Cup. If, as looks likely, Gareth Bale stays, Spurs will be genuine contenders.

WBA

Manager Steve Clarke
Key arrivals Nicolas Anelka (Juventus, Ita), Goran Popov (Dynamo Kiev, Ukr, on loan)
Key departures Marc-Antoine Fortune (Wigan Athletic), Zoltan Gera (released), Gonzalo Jara (released), Jerome Thomas (Crystal Palace)
With Romelu Lukaku back at Chelsea, and Peter Odemwingie ostracised, goals could be a problem, unless veteran Anelka can provide.

Prolific...Swansea want goals from Bony

WEST HAM UNITED

Manager Sam Allardyce
Key arrivals Adrian (Real Betis, Spa), Andy Carroll (Liverpool), Razvan Rat (Shakhtar Donetsk, Ukr), Daniel Whitehead (Stockport County)
Key departures Carlton Cole (released), Robert Hall (Bolton Wanderers)
After his spell on loan at Upton Park last season, the Hammers have broken the bank to land £15m Carroll – an expensive but probably successful way to consolidate their top-flight status.

FRANCE: LIGUE 1

Monaco money to challenge PSG

KEY DATES

Season starts
August 9, 2013

Season finishes
May 18, 2014

Paris Saint-Germain may have had it all their own way last term, cantering to a first league crown since 1994 with a massive 12-point advantage over Marseille, but it will be a huge shock if this season's title ends up as another one-horse race.

The reason, of course, is the return to the top flight after a two-year absence of Monaco – a club whose Russian owner, Dmitry Rybolovlev, has pockets every bit as deep as the Qataris at PSG.

Rybolovlev has serious aspirations of winning the league this season and he made his intentions crystal clear in the transfer market.

Midfielders James Rodriguez and Joao Moutinho arrived from Porto for €45million and €25m respectively, while France midfielder Jeremy Toulalan – who won two titles with Lyon before moving to Spain in 2011 – returned home from Malaga. Yet those signings were dwarfed by the arrival of Radamel Falcao from Atletico Madrid.

Depending on what you read and who you believe, the undisclosed fee for the Colombian is believed to be anything from €45m up to nearer €60m once third parties have had their share, but it was less the money than the statement of intent that had jaws dropping worldwide. At 27, Falcao is not only at the peak of his powers, he can justifiably lay claim to being the best striker in the world after scoring a staggering 34 goals in just 40 games for Atletico last season.

With the domestic prospect of PSG v Monaco and Edinson Cavani v Falcao this season, you would have thought everybody in the French football industry would have been delighted with two such heavyweight clashes. After all, isn't it better to have some genuine competition in Ligue 1? Isn't it better to have three of the world's best goalscorers playing in France (Cavani, Falcao, Ibrahimovic)? And doesn't this extra spice make Ligue 1 a more attractive proposition for those who buy footballing TV rights around the world, which in turn helps to fill the coffers of all the Ligue 1 clubs?

You would have thought that was a no-brainer, but not everyone is enthusiastic about Monaco's arrival back in the top flight. A number of club owners are up in arms about the fiscal advantages the club enjoy from being based in the principality, where tax and social charges are minimal in comparison to France.

This perceived lack of a level playing field – which didn't seem to bother people quite so much before a Russian takeover – has so incensed certain parties that the French league (LFP) has put forward a proposal that from the start of the 2014-15 season all its clubs must have their headquarters located in France for tax purposes. The matter has gone to court, with Monaco claiming that the LFP plan violates principles of free movement and free competition.

> "Managing a club as important as Monaco is a great honour. I have an incredible feeling and great pride – but this is just the beginning"
>
> Monaco owner Dmitry Rybolovlev

There are those who would seem to have a valid point when asking when has football ever been a level playing field.

PSG's runaway title success shows that the rest of Ligue 1 pre-Monaco weren't even remotely competitive because of the Parisians' Qatari money. And the fact that a compromise was mooted whereby Monaco would pay €200m over a period of years to "encourage" the other clubs to drop their objections suggests this is little more than a shakedown.

Rybolovlev certainly sees it that way and is digging his heels in, willing to fight the LFP tooth and nail in the French courts. Relations between the two parties, meanwhile, will have further degenerated after the disciplinary commission of the LFP handed Monaco a two-point deduction (with a further point suspended) at the start of this season, plus a sanction of one match to be played behind closed doors, after fans let off fireworks and invaded the pitch following a game against Le Mans in May.

The new season also has the added ingredient of PSG losing

Marquee signing...Colombian striker Falcao (right) in action for Monaco in a pre-season friendly against Fortuna Dusseldorf

their coach, Carlo Ancelotti, to Real Madrid in the close season and replacing him with former national boss Laurent Blanc. It's fair to say that the general reaction to the appointment of *"Le President"* was lukewarm and it remains to be seen how he will rework his side to see off the threat of Claudio Ranieri's Monaco.

Quiet market

For the rest of Ligue 1, the transfer market's reopening in the summer was a relatively quiet affair. Lille sold midfielder Dimitri Payet to Marseille for €10m, while their highly rated left-back Lucas Digne was involved in a tug of war between (you guessed it) PSG and Monaco – with a reported monthly salary offer of €270,000 seeming to tip the scales in the favour of the top-flight newcomers.

One player bucking the current trend for all things Monaco is 21-year-old defensive midfielder Nampalys Mendy. Despite the club desperately trying to keep hold of the youngster, Mendy opted to leave the Ligue 2 champions and join Nice, who finished a highly creditable fourth in Ligue 1 last season under Claude Puel.

While player movement may have been slow, the same can't be said for coaches. With Rudi Garcia heading for Roma, Lille have brought in former Montpellier coach Rene Girard, while veteran Jean Fernandez was handed the reins at Montpellier. Philippe Montanier returned from Real Sociedad in Spain to take over at Rennes and former Italy striker Fabrizio Ravanelli was installed at Ajaccio.

Finally, welcome back Nantes, one of the country's most successful clubs, who return to the top flight for the first time since 2009. However, although they may have won eight Ligue 1 titles, this is one promoted club who have a long way to go if they want to challenge for the championship again any time soon.

Howard Johnson

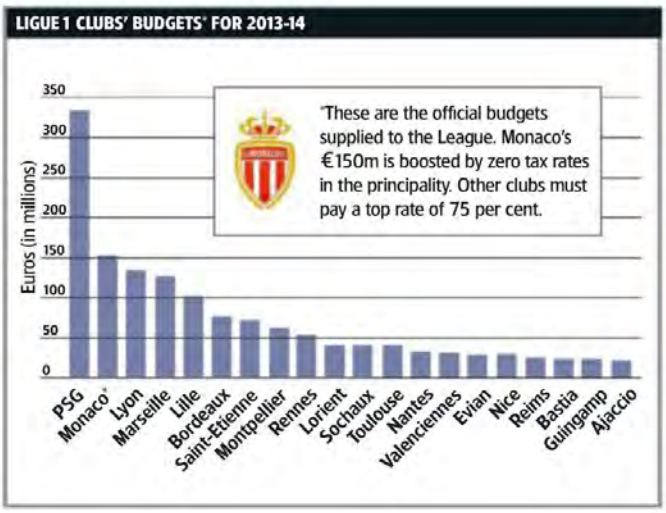
• *For all this season's Ligue 1 fixtures, go to www.worldsoccer.com/world-service*

Promotion...Nantes players celebrate their return to the top flight

Back...but Blanc's return to club football with PSG has attracted no great enthusiasm

New beginning...Ajaccio coach Ravanelli

LIGUE 1 CLUBS' BUDGETS* FOR 2013-14



Ligue 1 2013-14

FRANCE: LIGUE 1

Team-by-team guide to the season

Blues quartet...Bastia parade their four latest signings ahead of the new campaign

AJACCIO

Coach Fabrizio Ravanelli
Key arrivals Laurent Bonnart (Lille), Claude Dielna (Olympiakos, Gre, on loan), Cedric Hengbart (Auxerre), Anthony Scribe (Corte)
Key departures Anthony Lippini (Clermont), Frederic Sammaritano (released), Damien Tiberi (Laval)
For a second successive season the Corsicans narrowly avoided the drop last term – which is a massive success for such a small club. New coach Ravanelli will be hoping to improve on 17th place, but staying in Ligue 1 will be the only objective.

BASTIA

Coach Frederic Hantz
Key arrivals Drissa Diakite (Olympiakos, Gre), Claudiu Keseru (Angers), Francois Modesto (Olympiakos, Gre), Florian Raspentino (Marseille, on loan)
Key departures Gael Angoula (Angers), Landry Bonnefoi (Chateauroux)
Hantz performed wonders last season to achieve a 12th-place finish. How much it will have taken out of his modest squad remains to be seen, but it's unlikely Bastia will better last season's efforts.

BORDEAUX

Coach Francis Gillot
Key arrivals Jeremie Brechet (Troyes)
Key departures Evan Chevalier (released), Abdoulaye Keita (released), Anthony Modeste (Hoffenheim, Ger), Benoit Tremoulinas (Dynamo Kiev, Ukr)
The French Cup winners enjoyed an excellent season on a very tight budget, finishing seventh under the canny stewardship of Gillot. If they can improve on that they will be doing well.

EVIAN

Coach Pascal Dupraz
Key arrivals Nicolas Benezet (Nimes)
Key departures none
The beaten French Cup finalists will be looking to climb the table after finishing 16th last time out. It's not certain that they will be able to pull it off, though – and if they don't get off to a good start it could be a long, hard campaign.

GUINGAMP

Coach Jocelyn Gourvennec
Key arrivals Steven Langil (Auxerre), Jeremy Sorbon (Caen)
Key departures Francois Bellugou (Nancy)
They secured the second promotion slot from Ligue 2, behind Monaco, but won't have any ambitions besides avoiding an instant return from whence they came.

LILLE

Coach Rene Girard
Key arrivals Jonathan Delaplace (Zulte Waregem, Blg), Julian Jeanvier (Nancy), Simon Kjaer (Wolfsburg, Ger), Thibault Peyre (Toulouse)
Key departures Laurent Bonnart (Ajaccio), Aurelien Chedjou (Galatasaray, Tur), Lucas Digne (Paris Saint-Germain), Dimitri Payet (Marseille)
Sixth place was a disappointment for the ambitious northern club last term and coach Rudi Garcia departed for Roma. Under Girard, they might have to consolidate.

Welcome...Lyon advisor Bernard Lacombe (left) and coach Garde greet Danic

LORIENT

Coach Christian Gourcuff
Key arrivals Vincent Aboubakar (Valenciennes), Raphael Guerreiro (Caen)
Key departures Ludovic Giuly (retired)
A superb previous campaign saw the minnows snaffle eighth place under the resourceful Gourcuff. It's hard to see them punching so far above their weight for a second successive season.

LYON

Coach Remi Garde
Key arrivals Gael Danic (Valenciennes), Miguel Lopes (Sporting Lisbon, Por, on loan)
Key departures Dejan Lovren (Southampton, Eng) Anthony Reveillere (released)
Once again Lyon have had to keep a tight rein on their pre-season spending, so if Garde can secure a third-place finish as he did last term then he will have worked wonders once more.

New colours...Payet of Marseille

MARSEILLE

Coach Elie Baup
Key arrivals Benjamin Mendy (Le Havre), Dimitri Payet (Lille)
Key departures Florian Raspentino (Bastia, on loan)
Baup will have his troops well drilled and difficult to beat as usual, but these days they simply don't have the financial clout to pose any real problems at the very top of the table – especially now that they also have Monaco to deal with.

Denmark to Reims...Albaek

MONACO

Coach Claudio Ranieri
Key arrivals Eric Abidal (Barcelona, Spa), Ricardo Carvalho (Real Madrid, Spa), Radamel Falcao (Atletico Madrid, Spa), Joao Moutinho (Porto, Por), James Rodriguez (Porto, Por), Jeremy Toulalan (Malaga, Spa)
Key departures Dennis Appiah (Caen), Nampalys Mendy (Nice)
The promoted side have serious aspirations of winning Ligue 1 this season. With a smart coach in Ranieri, and Colombian sharpshooter Falcao in the side, anything is possible. If PSG weren't around, they would be a shoo-in.

MONTPELLIER

Coach Jean Fernandez
Key arrivals Djamel Bakar (Nancy), Morgan Sanson (Le Mans), Siaka Tiene (Paris Saint-Germain)
Key departures Younes Belhanda (Dynamo Kiev, Ukr), Marco Estrada (Al Wahda, UAE)
After winning the title in 2012 it was inevitable Montpellier would have something of a comedown last season. Club owner Louis Nicollin will surely demand a better league position than 12th and, with no European football to distract, that should be achievable.

NANTES

Coach Michel Der Zakarian
Key arrivals Fernando Aristeguieta (Caracas, Ven), Gabriel Cichero (Caracas, Ven), Oswaldo Vizcarrondo (Club America, Mex)
Key departures Karim Djellabi (Auxerre), Ismael Keita (Angers)
Nantes are a big club and they will want to make their mark on their return to Ligue 1. They would do well to concentrate on the task at hand, though, which is simply to avoid relegation.

NICE

Coach Claude Puel
Key arrivals Nampalys Mendy (Monaco)
Key departures none
The surprise packet of last term, with Puel seeming to have found his spiritual home. If anyone can upset the expected PSG/Monaco monopoly this season, it could well be Nice.

PARIS S-G

Coach Laurent Blanc
Key arrivals Edinson Cavani (Napoli, Ita), Lucas Digne (Lille)
Key departures Sylvain Armand (Rennes), Jean-Christophe Bahebeck (Valenciennes, on loan), David Beckham (retired), Siaka Tiene (Montpellier)
With Monaco flashing the cash, the pressure is on and PSG responded with a French league record fee to sign Cavani. Their Champions League ambitions could prove an Achilles heel.

REIMS

Coach Hubert Fournier
Key arrivals Mads Albaek (Midtjylland, Den), Prince Oniangue (Tours)
Key departures Johan Liebus (released), Johann Ramare (released)
Reims achieved their primary goal of avoiding relegation last season with a little bit to spare. It's highly likely that they will do the same again this time.

RENNES

Coach Philippe Montanier
Key arrivals Sylvain Armand (Paris Saint-Germain), Jean Makoun (Aston Villa, Eng)
Key departures Yacine Brahimi (Grenada, Spa), Johann Carrasso (Metz)
New coach Montanier has a good reputation and Rennes will have been disappointed to finish in the bottom half of the table last season. Expect big improvements.

SAINT-ETIENNE

Coach Christophe Galtier
Key arrivals none
Key departures Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang (Borussia Dortmund, Ger)
Saint-Etienne won the League Cup and finished fourth in the league, which was a great performance from Galtier's men. If they don't lose their key assets they should be aiming for more of the same.

SOCHAUX

Coach Eric Hely
Key arrivals Julien Faussurier (Troyes)
Key departures none
It was touch and go whether Sochaux would avoid the drop last season. Surely they can't be as poor again...

TOULOUSE

Coach Alain Casanova
Key arrivals Mihai Roman (Rapid Bucharest, Rom), Uros Spajic (Red Star Belgrade, Ser)
Key departures Thibault Peyre (Lille)
Toulouse were mid-table all the way last term. However, without some massive additions to the playing staff that's unlikely to change anytime soon.

Switch...Roman has swapped Bucharest for the south of France with Toulouse

In at Valenciennes...Chitu

VALENCIENNES

Coach Daniel Sanchez
Key arrivals Jean-Christophe Bahebeck (Paris Saint-Germain, on loan), Aurelian Chitu (Viitorul Constanta, Rom), Eloge Enza Yamissi (Troyes)
Key departures Vincent Aboubakar (Lorient), Gael Danic (Lyon), Nicolas Isimat-Mirin (Monaco)
Valenciennes were happy to finish up in mid-table again last season. And that's where they are likely to be again this time.

GERMANY: BUNDESLIGA

Guardiola über alles

KEY DATES

Season starts
August 9, 2013

Season ends
May 10, 2014

New home...coach Guardiola in the dressing room of his new Bavarian employers

At each and every step of the forthcoming season, the fortunes of new Bayern Munich coach Pep Guardiola are guaranteed to be the number one narrative, with the twists and turns of the ex-Barcelona boss's Bavarian adventure chronicled and examined in the minutest detail.

The tactics and playing style Guardiola adopts, the personnel he selects, the way he adapts to German working conditions, his relations with the media and even the figure he cuts in a pair of lederhosen will all be placed under the media microscope. And for the most sought-after coach on the planet, the phrase "no hiding place" will be the ever-present reality.

When Guardiola's arrival at the Allianz Arena was announced in January, it was widely portrayed as the final piece in the jigsaw to definitively put Bayern on top of the European pile. However, a lot can happen in six months, and by masterminding the most magnificent of clean sweeps – victories in the Champions League, Bundesliga and German Cup – veteran coach Jupp Heynckes effectively tore up the road map to the summit, in the process making himself an almost impossible act to follow.

> "It is a great fillip to bring the world's most successful coach to Bayern; it is a wonderful thing not only for Bayern but for the whole of German football"
>
> Bayern chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge on Pep Guardiola

Perfection, of course, cannot be bettered, and for this very good reason it would be wise for Guardiola to play it conservatively, forgoing the Camp Nou franchise revolution for continuity and simply keeping the high-powered Bayern engine ticking over. Forget the radical.

But if Guardiola is feeling the strain of Alpine-high expectations, he certainly did not show it during his first official Bayern press conference, charming the 240 journalists who hung on his every word with good humour, modesty, charisma and a surprisingly strong command of the German language.

All in all, it was the best possible start to a new era at the Bayern trophy factory.

With an all-conquering group of players already in place, a surfeit of young talent (the average age of the Bayern squad is only 25), plus the addition of Guardiola and €37million attacking-midfield acquisition Mario Gotze from Borussia Dortmund, Bayern are naturally odds-on favourites to defend the title they clinched so comfortably last season. But that's not to say that the Bavarians only have to turn up to prevail in this, the 51st edition of the Bundesliga.

Every three or four years, Bayern have a tendency to misplace their domestic golden touch and, with everybody gunning for them, such an accident cannot be ruled out in the months ahead.

Teams who win big often suffer from a subsequent loss of hunger and Guardiola may find it tough outside of his Catalan comfort blanket. And it's also conceivable that the Bavarians will be distracted and drained by the demands of the Club World Cup in December.

Attacking elan

In the event of Bayern slipping up, no team is better equipped to take advantage than Dortmund. Fresh from last season's Champions League exploits – when they only lost narrowly in the Final to Bayern – they can sweep anyone in the country aside with their attacking elan. And despite being destabilised by the shock loss of Gotze, and striker Robert Lewandowski's desire to fly the nest, the Westfalenstadion side are a remarkably resilient bunch who are warriors on the pitch while still capable of absorbing the regular loss of influential figures.

A Dortmund title push will depend on an improvement in their squad depth. That may be a huge challenge, but it is one made to measure for coach Jurgen Klopp, a born leader with a supreme flair for galvanising and motivating. The signing of Armenia international Henrikh Mkhitaryan from Shakhtar Donetsk is a signal of intent.

While the Bundesliga race is likely to boil down to a Bayern-Dortmund shoot-out, the battle for a top-four spot and Champions League qualification could well be a more democratic exercise, with several teams harbouring genuine hopes of breaking through.

Third last season and just a point adrift of runners-up Dortmund, Bayer Leverkusen may have lost two key performers in forward Andre Schurrle and Spanish right-back Daniel Carvajal – who left for Chelsea and Real

Madrid respectively – but they remain full of counter-attacking threat, infectious vitality and the marksmanship of Stefan Kiessling, who was the Bundesliga's top scorer last term.

Schalke have a wealth of creative and front-line brilliance to call on with predatory striker Klaas-Jan Huntelaar, attacking midfielder Julian Draxler and the left-sided Christian Clemens, a recent buy from Cologne. Meanwhile, Armin Veh's young and resourceful Eintracht Frankfurt side rightly believe they can build on their over-achieving feats of last term, when they rose from top-flight new boys to sixth spot.

Wolfsburg are also back on an upward curve. Spearheaded by the strike force of Ivica Olic and Bas Dost, they looked far more fluid and sharper in the second half of last season, and they also boast one of the best corridor-of-power operators around in ex-Werder Bremen general manager Klaus Allofs. Hanover could be on the verge of a great leap forward following a promising summer recruitment drive that saw the arrival of Dortmund's gifted young schemer Leonardo Bittencourt and promising central midfielder Edgar Prib from Greuther Furth.

For the Bundesliga to truly move up to another level it desperately needs a bit more end product from some of its most popular sides. Over the last few years, the prestigious likes of Hamburg, Bremen, Stuttgart and Hertha Berlin have all been on the sick list, but if that quartet were to suddenly awaken it would be a shot in the arm for the entire league.

Hamburg and Bremen both made changes of leadership this summer, the former bringing in ex-Bayern centre-back Oliver Kreuzer to replace Frank Arnesen as director of sport, while Bremen dispensed with the services of Thomas Schaaf after 14 years and appointed former Freiburg boss Robin Dutt, who in his last incarnation was the German federation technical director.

Hot shot...Kiessling was the Bundesliga's top scorer with 25 goals for Leverkusen last term

Re-established in top flight

After running away with last term's second division, Hertha's mission to re-establish themselves in the top flight will, to a large extent, depend on the continued excellence of Brazilian creator-cum-goalscorer, Ronny.

Stuttgart, who were champions in 2007, have done no end of good transfer market business, particularly with the acquisition of Leverkusen defensive all-rounder Daniel Schwaab, Moroccan striker Mohammed Abdellaoue from Hanover and Dortmund's sparky midfielder Moritz Leitner on a two-year loan deal.

Director of sport...Hamburg's Kreuzer

Returning to the Bundesliga for the first time in 28 years, Eintracht Braunschweig's one and only goal will be survival and the same applies to Augsburg, who miraculously managed to pull away from the drop zone in the latter part of last season

Freiburg, however, whose reward for a wonderful fifth-place finish was to have their heart ripped out with half their side snapped up by Bundesliga outfits with deeper pockets, could struggle.

Nick Bidwell

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BUNDESLIGA CHAMPIONS: LAST 10 YEARS

Bayern Munich	5
Borussia Dortmund	2
Stuttgart	1
Werder Bremen	1
Wolfsburg	1

BUNDESLIGA CLUBS 2013-14

1 Augsburg
2 Bayer Leverkusen
3 Bayern Munich
4 Borussia Dortmund
5 Borussia M'gladbach
6 Eintracht Braunschweig
7 Eintracht Frankfurt
8 Freiburg
9 Hamburg
10 Hanover
11 Hertha Berlin
12 Hoffenheim
13 Mainz
14 Nuremberg
15 Schalke
16 Stuttgart
17 Werder Bremen
18 Wolfsburg

GERMANY: BUNDESLIGA

Team-by-team guide to the season

AUGSBURG

Coach Markus Weinzierl
Key arrivals Halil Altintop (Trabzonspor, Tur), Mathias Fetsch (Kickers Offenbach), Marwin Hitz (Wolfsburg), Raphael Holzhauser (Stuttgart, on loan)
Key departures Simon Jentzsch (retired), Sebastian Langkamp (Hertha Berlin), Torsten Oehrl (Eintracht Braunschweig), Milan Petrzela (Viktoria Plzen, CzR)
The Bavarian club's amazing escape from the jaws of relegation last season – by the winter break they had only nine points – was a major boost to their self-esteem. Can they dodge the bullet a second time? Their lack of killer instinct in front of goal suggests probably not.

BAYER LEVERKUSEN

Coach Sami Hyypia
Key arrivals Giulio Donati (Internazionale, Ita), Roberto Hilbert (Besiktas, Tur), Robbie Kruse (Fortuna Dusseldorf), Andres Palop (Sevilla, Spa), Son Heung-min (Hamburg), Emir Spahic (Sevilla, Spa), Konstantinos Stafylidis (PAOK, Gre)
Key departures Dani Carvajal (Real Madrid, Spa), Hajime Hosogai (Hertha Berlin), Michal Kadlec (Fenerbahce, Tur), Christoph Kramer (Borussia Monchengladbach, on loan), Andre Schurrle (Chelsea, Eng), Daniel Schwaab (Stuttgart)
Director of sport Rudi Voller says he will be delighted with a repeat of last term's third place and, even though front runner Schurrle has left for Chelsea, the Rhinelanders should again be contenders for Champions League qualification. Hyypia is now in sole charge following the decision of co-coach Sascha Lewandowski to return to working with the youth team.

BAYERN MUNICH

Coach Pep Guardiola
Key arrivals Thiago Alcantara (Barcelona, Spa), Mario Gotze (Borussia Dortmund), Jan Kirchhoff (Mainz)
Key departures Mario Gomez (Fiorentina, Ita), Nils Petersen (Werder Bremen), Anatoliy Tymoshchuk (Zenit, Rus)
Philipp Lahm, captain of the reigning European and German champions, insists they will be even stronger now that ex-Barcelona boss Guardiola is calling the shots and it's hard to disagree. Gotze offers Bayern even more options in the attacking third.

BORUSSIA DORTMUND

Coach Jurgen Klopp
Key arrivals Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang (Saint-Etienne, Fra), Henrikh Mkhitaryan (Shakhtar Donetsk, Ukr), Sokratis Papastathopoulos (Werder Bremen)
Key departures Leonardo Bittencourt (Hanover), Daniel Ginczek (Nuremberg), Mario Gotze (Bayern Munich), Julian Koch (Mainz), Moritz Leitner (Stuttgart, on loan), Felipe Santana (Schalke)
Last season's Champions League and Bundesliga runners-up will miss the goals and creativity of Gotze, but the Ruhr outfit were never a one-man band and they can still outdo any side in the country for collective spirit, dynamism and attacking potency. Armenian international Mkhitaryan is an interesting addition.

Ruhr recruits...Klopp with (from left) Aubameyang, Papastathopoulos and Mkhitaryan

BORUSSIA MONCHENGLADBACH

Coach Lucien Favre
Key arrivals Christoph Kramer (Bayer Leverkusen, on loan), Max Kruse (Freiburg), Raffael (Dynamo Kiev, Ukr)
Key departures Igor De Camargo (Standard Liege, Blg), Mike Hanke (Freiburg)
After spending €30million last summer for little return – a so-so eighth-place finish – Gladbach have been more circumspect in the market this summer and seem to have secured value for money in Brazilian playmaker Raffael (€5m) and versatile attacker Kruse (€2.5m).

EINTRACHT BRAUNSCHWEIG

Coach Torsten Lieberknecht
Key arrivals Marco Caligiuri (Mainz), Simeon Jackson (Norwich City, Eng), Torsten Oehrl (Augsburg), Timo Perthel (Duisburg)
Key departures Pierre Merkel (Hallescher), Oliver Petersch (Arminia Bielefeld)
Long gone are the days of the 70s and early 80s when Braunschweig were Bundesliga pioneers as the first football club in the country to adopt shirt advertising and confident enough to sign Paul Breitner from Real Madrid. Competing in the elite for the first time in nearly three decades, they are expected to struggle among the big boys.

EINTRACHT FRANKFURT

Coach Armin Veh
Key arrivals Johannes Flum (Freiburg), Joselu (Hoffenheim, on loan), Jan Rosenthal (Freiburg), Marco Russ (Wolfsburg), Stephan Schrock (Hoffenheim), Felix Wiedwald (Duisburg)
Key departures Heiko Butscher (Bochum), Karim Matmour (Kaiserslautern), Oka Nikolov (Philadelphia Union, USA), Olivier Occean (Kaiserslautern, on loan)
After an impressive sixth place last term – the best performance from a team new to the top flight for 15 years – they hope to keep up the good work. The continued excellence of goalscoring midfielder Alexander Meier and the recruitment of a genuine front-line focal point will be vital.

In at Frankfurt...Flum

FREIBURG

Coach Christian Streich
Key arrivals Francis Coquelin (Arsenal, Eng, on loan) Gelson Fernandes (Sporting Lisbon, Por), Mike Hanke (Borussia Monchengladbach), Christopher Jullien (Auxerre, Fra), Felix Klaus (Greuther Furth), Admir Mehmedi (Dynamo Kiev, Ukr, on loan), Vaclav Pilar (Wolfsburg, on loan)
Key departures Daniel Caligiuri (Wolfsburg), Johannes Flum (Eintracht Frankfurt), Max Kruse (Borussia Monchengladbach), Cedric Makiadi (Werder Bremen), Jan Rosenthal (Eintracht Frankfurt)
In his 18 months at the controls, Streich has proved himself peerless at turning water into wine but, after losing the spine of his side, he may be hard pressed to continue working his magic.

HAMBURG

Coach Thorsten Fink
Key arrivals Kerem Demirbay (Borussia Dortmund), Johan Djourou (Arsenal, Eng, on loan)

Holding role...Moritz is set to shore up the Mainz midfield

Jacques Zoua (Basle, Swi)
Key departures Marcus Berg (Panathinaikos, Gre), Son Heung-min (Bayer Leverkusen)
While not exactly starved of top-end talent, all in all the right stuff is too thinly spread. And with Son departing the outlook is uncertain to say the least.

HANOVER

Coach Mirko Slomka
Key arrivals Leonardo Bittencourt (Borussia Dortmund), Edgar Prib (Greuther Furth), Salif Sane (Nancy, Fra)
Key departures Mohammed Abdellaoue (Stuttgart), Mario Eggimann (Union Berlin), Konstantin Rausch (Stuttgart)
The club are something of an enigma: plagued by intrigue, disharmony and controversy behind the scenes, but remarkably consistent on match days and have not finished out of the top 10 for the past three seasons.

HERTHA BERLIN

Coach Jos Luhukay
Key arrivals Alexander Baumjohann (Kaiserslautern), Hajime Hosogai (Bayer Leverkusen), Sebastian Langkamp (Augsburg), Johannes Van den Bergh (Fortuna Dusseldorf)
Key departures Alfredo Morales (Ingolstadt)
Luhukay believes his promoted team have one important lesson to learn if they are to stay in the top flight: they need to be much quicker in switching from defence to attack and vice-versa. But the coach has no relegation fears, stating: "There are at least seven or eight teams worse than us."

HOFFENHEIM

Coach Markus Gisdol
Key arrivals Kevin Akpoguma (Karlsruher), Tarik Elyounoussi (Rosenborg, Nor), Anthony Modeste (Bordeaux, Fra)
Key departures Joselu (Eintracht Frankfurt, on loan), Filip Malbasic (Partizan Belgrade, Ser, on loan), Stephan Schrock (Eintracht Frankfurt), Danny Williams (Reading, Eng)
Following a shambolic campaign in which they employed three coaches and only stayed in the Bundesliga with a play-off victory over Kaiserslautern, the south-westerners have released no fewer than 10 professionals.

MAINZ

Coach Thomas Tuchel
Key arrivals Johannes Geis (Greuther Furth), Julian Koch (Borussia Dortmund), Christoph Moritz (Schalke), Shinji Okazaki (Stuttgart), Park Joo-ho (Basle, Swi), Sebastian Polter (Wolfsburg)
Key departures Andreas Ivanschitz (Levante, Spa), Jan Kirchhoff (Bayern Munich), Marcel Risse (Cologne), Adam Szalai (Schalke)
Even the highly rated Tuchel might find it hard to keep his side's head above water in the wake of the summer comings and goings. The loss of top scorer Szalai was a massive blow and there is doubt whether new front men, Okazaki of Japan or Germany Under-21 Polter, can carry the same load.

NUREMBERG

Coach Michael Wiesinger
Key arrivals Martin Angha (Arsenal, Eng), Josip Drmic (Zurich, Swi), Daniel Ginczek (Borussia Dortmund), Emanuel Pogatetz (Wolfsburg), Mariusz Stepinski (Widzew Lodz, Pol)
Key departures Timm Klose (Wolfsburg), Timmy Simons (Club Brugge, Blg)
In his first full season at the helm, Wiesinger's priority this term is for his side to be "free of relegation worries". However, since uttering those words, talismanic central defender Klose has left.

SCHALKE

Coach Jens Keller
Key arrivals Christian Clemens (Cologne), Leon Goretzka (Bochum), Felipe Santana (Borussia Dortmund), Adam Szalai (Mainz)
Key departures Christoph Metzelder (retired), Christoph Moritz (Mainz)
Hats off to Schalke general manager Horst Heldt for the quality of the reinforcements he has brought in this summer: the youthful promise of midfielders Clemens and Goretzka, ace Hungarian striker Szalai and Brazilian centre-back Santana, who at any team other than Dortmund would have been an automatic starter.

STUTTGART

Coach Bruno Labbadia
Key arrivals Mohammed Abdellaoue (Hanover), Thorsten Kirschbaum (Energie Cottbus), Moritz Leitner (Borussia Dortmund, on loan), Konstantin Rausch (Hanover), Marco Rojas (Melbourne Victory, Aus), Gotoku Sakai (Albirex Niigata, Jap), Sercan Sararer (Greuther Furth), Daniel Schwaab (Bayer Leverkusen)
Key departures Shinji Okazaki (Mainz)
Following two-and-a-half years of crisis management, reduced budgets and decidedly mediocre results, the club firmly believe better times are around the corner. Much will be expected of Germany under-21 creator Leitner.

WERDER BREMEN

Coach Robin Dutt
Key arrivals Luca Caldirola (Internazionale, Ita), Cedric Makiadi (Freiburg), Nils Petersen (Bayern Munich)

Part of the new Bremen...Petersen

Key departures Sokratis Papastathopoulos (Borussia Dortmund)
Suddenly the ultra-conservative northern club is embracing change, bedding in a new leadership structure of Dutt as coach and general manager Thomas Eichin. The signing of defender Caldirola, the skipper of Italy's Under-21s, was a coup.

WOLFSBURG

Coach Dieter Hecking
Key arrivals Daniel Caligiuri (Freiburg), Max Grun (Greuther Furth), Timm Klose (Nuremberg), Stefan Kutschke (RB Leipzig)
Key departures Simon Kjaer (Lille, Fra), Emanuel Pogatetz (Nuremberg), Sebastian Polter (Mainz), Marco Russ (Eintracht Frankfurt)
Since shopaholic boss Felix Magath was removed early last season, the VW-owned club have reverted to team building on a rational basis and seem to be benefiting hugely from the stability and focus.

GREECE: SUPER LEAGUE

Winning not enough for champions

Expectant...Olympiakos owner Marinakis (left) remains supportive of coach Michel, but more is required of the Spaniard's side this term

KEY DATES

Season starts
August 17, 2013
Season ends
May 2014

After three years at the helm of Olympiakos, shipping tycoon Vangelis Marinakis has realised that winning the Super League is not the only requirement; these days fans also demand exciting football and a respectable showing in the Champions League.

It was therefore no surprise that the champions were sometimes booed by their own supporters last term – despite the ease at which Olympiakos won a second straight double – and their Karaiskaki Stadium was often half empty.

"The fans have a right to dream of a better Olympiakos and I'm the first to want it too," says Marinakis. "I promise Olympiakos will be better and with a good performance in Europe."

Marinakis has given his full support to Spanish coach Michel and hired former France midfielder Christian Karembeu and ex-South Africa international Pierre Issa to help behind the scenes.

Marinakis has promised "a big name" signing, although neither of the club's early summer signings – Slovakia winger Vladimir Weiss of Italian club Pescara and Argentinian striker Alejandro Dominguez from Rayo Vallecano of Spain – quite fulfil that billing.

With another strict budget to work with, financially troubled Panathinaikos were relieved to have removed former France defender Jean-Alain Boumsong from the wage bill and new coach Yannis Anastasiou is not looking beyond the country's borders to boost a side that finished an embarrassing 37 points behind Olympiakos last time out.

"This is a top European club which is well respected abroad; we will build a team that will seek the top spot," says Anastasiou, who did bring in one foreigner with the signing of Sweden's Emir Bajrami from Dutch side Twente.

Ronaldinho bid

Olympiakos' main competition for the title may come from PAOK, who finished second last term and have hired experienced Dutch coach Huub Stevens. The club's majority shareholder Ivan Savvides revealed that Stevens was almost joined by Ronaldinho, but an offer for the Brazilian star of €6.5million was rejected.

Stevens' squad has been strengthened, however, with the acquisition of Greece international defensive midfielder Alexandros Tziolis from Monaco and Inigo Lopez of Granada in Spain.

PAS Giannina, who initially qualified for the Europa League, only to have their participation rejected by UEFA for not being in a healthy financial state, have a new coach in Savvas Pantelidis, who said his team will play "good soccer" and that "good results will follow".

> "My goals match PAOK. If we win every day, we will be the ultimate winners"
>
> PAOK coach Huub Stevens

There are also new men in charge at Panthrakikos (Akis Mantzios), Panionios (Kostas Panagopoulos), Platanias (Marinos Ouzounidis), Levadiakos (Takis Lemonis), Veria (Goran Stevanovic), and promoted pair Ergotelis (Giannis Petrakis) and Kalloni (Giannis Matzourakis).

The big news at OFI is the return to action of Argentinian winger Luciano Galletti, who last year underwent a successful kidney transplant with the donor being his father, Ruben."I have a big appetite to play and will give my 100 percent to the team," said the 33-year-old Galletti after 3,500 fans turned up to see him at the team's first training session.

Removed...Boumsong has gone

Lou Economopoulos

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SUPER LEAGUE CLUBS 2013-14

1 Apollon
Atromitos
Panathinaikos
Panionios
2 Aris
PAOK
3 Asteras
4 Ergotelis
OFI
5 Kalloni
6 Levadiakos
7 Olympiakos
8 Panetolikos
9 Panthrakikos
10 PAS Giannina
11 Platanias
12 Skoda Xanthi
13 Veria

HOLLAND: EREDIVISIE

De Boer sticks to his principles

KEY DATES

Season starts
August 2, 2013
Season ends
May 3, 2014

As Frank De Boer goes in search of a fourth consecutive title, the Ajax coach is happy to rely on the talent of the club's famous youth academy, with another batch of youngsters ready to step up to the first-team squad.

With Viktor Fischer primed to replace Christian Eriksen as and when his fellow Dane moves on, De Boer has the likes of Joel Veltman, Stefano Denswil and even 16-year-old Riechedly Bazoer waiting in the wings. Such is the club's faith in youth, it felt more than comfortable walking away when negotiations with Holland midfielder Adam Maher of AZ got too expensive.

Ajax's commitment to continuity also extends to the dugout, with De Boer and his assistant, Hennie Spijkerman, signing four-year deals in June.

Having gambled on instant success – and failed – in their centennial year last season, PSV have embarked on a U-turn this summer and opted to copy the Ajax model. Building a new team from the youth ranks is highly unusual for the Eindhoven-based club, but by installing ex-players such as Mark Van Bommel and Ruud Van Nistelrooy in their youth department it looks a serious plan.

New PSV coach Phillip Cocu was handed a four-year contract to allow him the time to build a new side. Jeremain Lens (Dynamo Kiev), Dries Mertens (Napoli) and Erik Pieters (Stoke City) have all gone, but Cocu has also added fresh faces with the signing of AZ's Maher and winger Florian Jozefzoon from RKC Waalwijk.

Future stars...Bazoer (left) celebrates with 20-year-old Jody Lukoki during Ajax's 3-0 win against Putten in a pre-season friendly

Feyenoord could go all the way this time, with coach Ronald Koeman having managed to renew the contracts of Graziano Pelle, who scored 27 goals last season, midfielder Jordy Clasie and defender Stefan De Vrij.

> "PSV really made an effort to get me...now I want to pay back the club with my performances on the pitch"
>
> New signing Adam Maher

Dutch Cup winners AZ have strengthened their defence, with coach Gertjan Verbeek bringing in Jan Wuytens from Utrecht and Heerenveen's Jeffrey Gouweleeuw. NAC Breda midfielder Nemanja Gudelj and Bosnian-born Australia international Eli Babalj from Melbourne Heart are the other newcomers. Although Maher and Jozy Altidore have gone, young Icelandic striker Aron Johannsson is waiting in the wings.

While Vitesse will struggle to cope without Wilfried Bony, the Eredivisie's top scorer with 31 goals last season who was sold to Swansea City, new coach Peter Bosz will hope that millionaire owner Merab Jordania continues his investment in the club.

Twente look in better health since Alfred Schreuder took over from Steve McClaren, but the former midfielder hasn't got the right papers so, according to the Dutch FA, Michel Jansen is the boss, with Schreuder his assistant.

Utrecht had a fine season last time out, but they paid the price for that success this summer, with midfielder Anouar Kali following Wuytens out of the door and joining Roda JC in what could be the start of a mass exodus.

Despite turmoil in the board room, which led to the resignation of chairman Robert Veenstra, Marco Van Basten's Heerenveen will fancy their chances of claiming a Europa League place.

Cambuur, back after 13 years, and Go Ahead Eagles, who return after 17, will face a difficult task to stay up as their promotions came as a huge surprise. Eagles have installed new coach Foeke Booy and both sides will attempt to emulate PEC Zwolle, who managed to stay up with ease last season after promotion.

Klaas-Jan Droppert

• *For all this season's Eredivisie fixtures, go to www.worldsoccer.com/world-service*

Staying...Pelle has renewed his contract

EREDIVISIE CLUBS 2013-14

1 ADO Den Haag
2 Ajax
3 AZ
4 Cambuur
5 Feyenoord
6 Go Ahead Eagles
7 Groningen
8 Heerenveen
9 Heracles
10 NAC Breda
11 NEC
12 PEC Zwolle
13 PSV
14 RKC Waalwijk
15 Roda JC
16 Twente
17 Utrecht
18 Vitesse

ITALY: SERIE A

Falling behind in Europe's big five

Inexplicable...no Serie A club was willing to outbid the Bundesliga for under-21 star Donati

KEY DATES

Season starts
August 24, 2013

Season ends
May 18, 2014

After a summer of positives – with excellent performances in the Confederations Cup in Brazil and the Euro Under-21 Championship – fears are once again raised about the state of the domestic game before the start of the new season.

The greatest concern lies with the fate of two of the stars of the under-21 side: defenders Luca Caldirola and Giulio Donati.

It is indicative of both the current, relative economic weakness of Italian football and of its eternal conformist caution that Caldirola and Donati were rewarded for their efforts in Israel with moves to the Bundesliga; Caldirola joining Werder Bremen and Donati going to Bayer Leverkusen. Although the pair played in Serie B last term, for Brescia and Grossetto respectively, both were owned by Internazionale – so we are not talking about a small club with no option but to sell a burgeoning talent.

The sales of Caldirola and Donati are just another example of how Italian football is traditionally slow in giving young stars a break at the highest level. Despite their excellent performances for the under-21s, no Serie A club was ready to come up with the €5million euros that the two German clubs offered for them.

Having been overtaken financially by the Premier League in England and La Liga in Spain, recent events seem to suggest that both Germany and France have also now outflanked Serie A.

While the results of German sides are there for all to see, the continuing economic power of French football, for the third summer in a row, has been forcibly brought home by the transfer market, with Napoli's Uruguay striker Edinson Cavani having joined Paris Saint-Germain for the tidy sum of €64m.

The record deal for Cavani means that in the last two years, Qatari-backed PSG have spent €273m on 10 Serie A players: Menez (Roma), Sirigu (Palermo), Sissoko (Juventus), Pastore (Palermo), Motta (Inter), Lavezzi (Napoli), Thiago Silva (Milan), Ibrahimovic (Milan), Verratti (Pescara) and now Cavani. That is an average price of €27m. By comparison, the 20 clubs in Serie A spent €523m on players last year, at an average of €500,000.

Serie A's most impressive

Heading abroad...like his fellow under-21 defender, Caldirola has ended up in Germany

import of the close season has been Juventus' €12m purchase of Carlos Tevez from Manchester City.

Even before the arrival of the Argentinian striker, it was hard to see beyond Juve for this season's title. The defending champions look to have a far stronger side than anyone else, but there are also a number of reasons to suggest that they have no real challenger out there.

Last term, Napoli were the one side that did – for a while at least – make a fight of it with Juventus, but they, of course, look much less competitive following the sale of Cavani. While owner Aurelio De Laurentis intends to spend some of the money brought in on new players, the big problem is on just who exactly.

The suspicion remains that new coach Rafa Benitez will have his work cut out maintaining the standard set by predecessor, Walter Mazzari. Benitez's inglorious six-month stint with Internazionale in 2010, when he appeared to have trouble adapting to the often complex club culture of Serie A, does not augur well for Napoli.

And then there is Inter themselves, the club who dominated the post-Calciopoli era. With a new coach in Mazzari, various new players and even a potential new owner in the Indonesian media tycoon Erik Thohir, they seem headed for the transitional season to end all transitional seasons. Improving on their mid-table finish of last term seems certain, given the Mazzari factor and that they will not be involved in Europe, but it requires a flight of imagination to envisage Inter as title challengers.

Fourth-placed Fiorentina were one of the pleasant surprises of last season, thanks to the excellent work of coach Vincenzo Montella. But with Stevan Jovetic and Adem Ljajic likely to leave, the team seems destined to be less competitive. The arrival of Mario Gomez from Bayern Munich for €16m may help somewhat.

> "Juventus showed more interest in signing me than anyone else"
>
> Carlos Tevez on his move to Serie A

Roma face the campaign with an unknown quantity in new French coach Rudi Garcia. Questions remain over the future of in-demand midfielder Daniele De Rossi and whether 37-year-old Francesco Totti can still steer the ship through stormy waters. Local rivals Lazio are still celebrating after beating Roma in last season's Italian Cup Final and the suspicion is that their ambitions do not go any further than establishing city dominance.

The only real threat to Juventus may come from Milan, which is hardly a surprise when you consider that – leaving out the post-Calciopoli Inter years – these two have won 13 of the last 16 league titles between them. With Massimiliano Allegri still in charge and Mario Balotelli and Stephan El Shaarawy in attack, Milan look like the only team that could give Juve a run for their money. It is arguable that Juve's quarter-final elimination by Bayern Munich last spring provided one important consolation: it left the squad with enough energy to go on and secure the league title.

If they were to go further this year, as they very much want to, then that could represent an opportunity for Milan.

Paddy Agnew

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Striking import...Tevez joined Juventus

Not child's play...Benitez may find it hard filling predecessor Mazzari's shoes at Napoli

SERIE A TITLE VICTORIES

Italy's most decorated clubs

Juventus	29
Milan	18
Internazionale	18
Genoa	9

SERIE A CLUBS 2013-14

1 Atalanta
2 Bologna
3 Cagliari
4 Catania
5 Chievo Verona
6 Fiorentina
7 Genoa Sampdoria
8 Internazionale Milan
9 Juventus Torino
10 Lazio Roma
11 Livorno
12 Napoli
13 Parma
14 Sassuolo
15 Udinese

ITALY: SERIE A

Team-by-team guide to the season

Striking pose...Bologna hope for goals from Bianchi now that Gilardino is gone

ATALANTA

Coach Stefano Colantuono
Key arrivals Constantin Nica (Dinamo Bucharest, Rom)
Key departures none
Did well to stay up last term once again, despite a two-point penalty for involvement in match fixing. The good news is that Argentinian striker German Denis is still there; the bad news is that compatriot Maxi Moralez might leave.

BOLOGNA

Coach Stefano Pioli
Key arrivals Denis Alibec (Internazionale, on loan), Rolando Bianchi (Torino), Abdallah Yaisien (Paris Saint-Germain, Fra)
Key departures none
Another difficult season looks on the cards, particularly as they can no longer rely on the goals of on-loan Alberto Gilardino.

CAGLIARI

Coach Ivo Pulga
Key arrivals Danilo Avelar (Karpaty Lviv, Ukr), Marios Ikonomou (PAS Giannina, Gre)
Key departures none
Defied the critics and beat the drop in a season when it felt as if they changed stadium venue on a weekly basis. Could struggle again.

CATANIA

Coach Rolando Maran
Key arrivals Federico Freire (Velez Sarsfield, Arg), Norbert Gyomber (Banska Bystrica, Slk), Sebastian Leto (Panathinaikos, Gre), Fabian Monzon (Lyon, Fra), Panagiotis Tachtsidis (Roma)
Key departures none
Had a good campaign last time out and should manage to stay up comfortably again.

CHIEVO

Coach Giuseppe Sannino
Key arrivals Dejan Lazarevic (Genoa), Yohan Tavares (Standard Liege, Blg)
Key departures Marco Andreolli (Internazionale), Kamil Vacek (Sparta Prague, CzR, on loan)
Did well despite limited means and new coach Sannino has promised they will stay up again.

FIORENTINA

Coach Vincenzo Montella
Key arrivals Marcos Alonso (Bolton Wanderers, Eng), Massimo Ambrosini (Milan), Marko Bakic (Torino), Mario Gomez (Bayern Munich, Ger), Joaquin (Malaga, Spa), Gustavo Munua (Levante, Spa), Oleksandr Yakovenko (Anderlecht, Blg)
Key departures Haris Seferovic (Real Sociedad, Spa), Luca Toni (Verona)
Back to form last term and only narrowly missed out on the Champions League. Montella, arguably coach of the year last season, remains but Stevan Jovetic seems certain to leave.

GENOA

Coach Fabio Liverani
Key arrivals none
Key departures none
Avoided the drop by the narrowest of margins and new boss Liverani faces a tough task.

INTERNAZIONALE

Coach Walter Mazzarri
Key arrivals Marco Andreolli (Chievo), Ishak Belfodil (Parma), Ruben Botta (Tigre, Arg), Hugo Campagnaro (Napoli), Mauro Icardi (Sampdoria), Diego Laxalt (Defensor, Uru),
Key departures Antonio Cassano (Parma)
A season of rebuilding looks certain. But will owner Massimo Moratti sell to Indonesian tycoon Erik Thohir?

Fiorentina switch...Massimo Ambrosini

Juve's new trio...(from left) Obgonna, Llorente and Tevez

JUVENTUS

Coach Antonio Conte
Key arrivals Fernando Llorente (Athletic Bilbao, Spa), Angelo Ogbonna (Torino), Carlos Tevez (Manchester City, Eng)
Key departures Emanuele Giaccherini (Sunderland, Eng)
They will start as Serie A favourites, but Conte may save his best efforts for the Champions League as last season's emphatic quarter-final elimination by champions Bayern Munich still hurts.

LAZIO

Coach Vladimir Petkovic
Key arrivals Felipe Anderson (Santos, Bra), Lucas Biglia (Anderlecht, Blg), Josip Elez (Hajduk Split, Cro), Diego Novaretti (Toluca, Mex), Brayan Perea (Deportivo Cali, Col), Vinicius (Cruzeiro, Bra)
Key departures Modibo Diakite (Sunderland, Eng), Pasquale Foggia (Dubai, UAE)
Plenty of new faces, but Petkovic will find it hard to improve on last season – after all, it doesn't get much better than beating Roma in the Italian Cup Final.

LIVORNO

Coach Davide Nicola
Key arrivals Marco Benassi (Internazionale, on loan), Francesco Bardi (Internazionale, on loan), Cristiano Piccini (Fiorentina, on loan)
Key departures Simone Salviato (Novara)
Three years after relegation, Livorno are back in Serie A. While coach Nicola did well to get them there, he will do even better to keep them there.

Shake on it...Poli (left) is welcomed to Milan on a loan deal from Sampdoria

MILAN

Coach Massimiliano Allegri
Key arrivals Andrea Poli (Sampdoria, on loan), Jherson Vergara (Deportes Quindio, Col), Cristian Zapata (Villarreal, Spa)
Key departures Massimo Ambrosini (Fiorentina), Bartosz Salamon (Sampdoria, on loan), Taye Taiwo (Bursaspor, Tur), Mario Yepes (released)
With Mario Balotelli and Stephan El Shaarawy up front, Milan look more competitive than 12 months ago.

NAPOLI

Coach Rafael Benitez
Key arrivals Pablo Armero (Udinese), Jose Callejon (Real Madrid, Spa), Dries Mertens (PSV), Rafael (Santos, Bra)
Key departures Hugo Campagnaro (Internazionale), Edinson Cavani (Paris Saint-Germain, Fra), Omar El Kaddouri (Torino, on loan), Antonio Rosati (Sassuolo, on loan)
Continuing to sell their best players is a problem for Benitez.

Now it's Parma...Cassano

PARMA

Coach Roberto Donadoni
Key arrivals Terry Antonis (Sydney, Aus), Soufiane Bidaoui (Lierse, Blg), Antonio Cassano (Internazionale), Felipe (Fiorentina), Filip Jankovic (Red Star Belgrade, Ser), Pedro Mendes (Sporting Lisbon, Por), Tomislav Saric (Inter Zapresic, Cro)
Key Departures Ishak Belfodil (Internazionale)
Even with Cassano and Mendes on board, it will be hard to make their mark in Serie A.

ROMA

Coach Rudi Garcia
Key arrivals Mehdi Benatia (Udinese), Tin Jedvaj (Dinamo Zagreb, Cro), Maicon (Manchester City, Eng), Kevin Strootman (PSV, Hol)
Key departures Jose Angel (Real Sociedad, Spa, on loan), Maarten Stekelenburg (Fulham, Eng), Simone Perrotta (retired), Panagiotis Tachtsidis (Catania)
Garcia has inherited a poisoned chalice which will be more difficult if the club sells Daniele De Rossi.

SAMPDORIA

Coach Delio Rossi
Key arrivals Manolo Gabbiadini (Juventus), Bartosz Salamon (Milan, on loan), Pawel Wszolek (Polonia Warsaw, Pol)
Key departures Mauro Icardi (Internazionale), Andrea Poli (Milan, on loan)
They did well to stay up last term following a one-point sanction and Rossi's men will do well to repeat the feat this time.

SASSUOLO

Coach Eusebio Di Francesco
Key arrivals Francesco Acerbi (Genoa), Marius Alexe (Dinamo Bucharest, Rom, on loan), Jasmin Kurtic (Palermo), Antonio Rosati (Napoli, on loan), Simone Zaza (Sampdoria)
Key departures Gennaro Troianiello (Palermo)
With a population of just 42,000, the smallest town ever to boast a Serie A club will use Reggiana's Stadio Del Tricolore in Reggio Emilia this season.

TORINO

Coach Giampiero Ventura
Key arrivals Nicola Bellomo (Bari), Cesare Bovo (Genoa), Omar El Kaddouri (Napoli, on loan), Alexander Farnerud (Young Boys, Swi), Ciro Immobile (Genoa), Emiliano Moretti (Genoa), Daniele Padelli (Udinese)
Key departures Rolando Bianchi (Bologna), Angelo Ogbonna (Juventus)
Just staying up again will do very nicely, especially given the departure of Ogbonna.

UDINESE

Coach Francesco Guidolin
Key arrivals Igor Bubnjic (Slaven Belupo, Cro), Bruno Fernandes (Novara), Jadson (Botafogo, Bra), Ivan Kelava (Dinamo Zagreb, Cro), Frano Mlinar (Inter Zapresic, Cro), Silvan Widmer (Granada, Spa)
Key departures Pablo Armero (Napoli), Antonio Candreva (Lazio), Juan Cuadrado (Fiorentina), Daniele Padelli (Torino)
Very active in the transfer market, but arguably their best business in the summer was the retention of coach Guidolin.

VERONA

Coach Andrea Mandorlini
Key arrivals Ezequiel Cirigliano (River Plate, Arg, on loan), Massimo Donati (Palermo), Luca Toni (Fiorentina)
Key Departures none
After 11 years in the second and third tiers, the 1985 Serie A champions make a welcome return and could do best of the three promoted clubs.

Question time...French coach Garcia faces the media on his unveiling at Roma

POLAND: EKSTRAKLASA

Legia to lead the way again

KEY DATES

Season starts
July 19, 2013

Season ends
April 4, 2014

Last season's double winners Legia Warsaw are red-hot favourites to dominate domestically once again, with Polish daily *Przeglad Sportowy* calculating that the reigning champions will have a budget of £1.66million to spend in pre-season – compared with a combined total of £1.22m for the other 15 Ekstraklasa clubs put together.

Despite their relatively strong financial situation, Legia still lost three key players in full-back and skipper Michal Zewlakow, who retired at the age of 37, defender Artur Jedrzejczyk, who joined Russian side Krasnodar, and veteran Serbian striker Danijel Ljuboja, who let his contract run down. Replacing them are 29-year-old Portuguese midfielder Helio Pinto from APOEL Nicosia, Estonian striker Henrik Ojamaa from Motherwell in Scotland, and Brazilian attacking midfielder Raphael Augusto, who arrives on loan from Fluminense.

Of perhaps greater significance, however, was the decision of coach Jan Urban to remain with the club for one more season, despite the rumours that he could leave for Spain and join Osasuna.

Runners-up Lech Poznan picked up £2.5m after selling Bulgarian midfielder Aleksandar Tonev to Aston Villa, but the club are in no hurry to spend their windfall. Dundee United left-back Barry Douglas and Zaglebie winger Szymon Pawlowski were signed, but both were free agents.

The best news for Lech is that experienced Colombian centre-back Manuel Arboleda has returned after eight months out injured to guarantee some stability in defence.

Smuda rebuilding

After a highly disappointing campaign last season, 13-times champions Wisla Krakow hope to rebuild under new coach Franciszek Smuda – the man who failed to get co-hosts Poland into the knockout stage of Euro 2012. But Smuda has already ruled out any quick-fix solution, stating: "We have three transfer windows to build our strength."

No quick fix...Wisla's Smuda

Slask Wroclaw, champions in 2012, finished third last term and also reached the Polish Cup Final, and they will have been delighted to extend the contract of their playmaker Sebastian Mila. Their situation off the pitch remains all too unpredictable, however, due to the on-going dispute between shareholders Zygmunt Solorz-Zak, who owns Polsat TV and the Polkomtel mobile network, and the city council.

> "It will be totally embarrassing if we do not win three titles in five years"
>
> Legia's demanding chairman Boguslaw Lesnodorski

Far happier with their owners are Zaglebie Lubin and, with copper and silver consortium KGHM behind them, they have their sights set on reaching Europe.

Ruch Chorzow finished second bottom last season and only survived when sixth-place Polonia Warsaw were relegated due to huge debts. The coming campaign could be crucial for Ruch and other clubs with financial problems. Widzew Lodz, for example, let their best player, defender Lukasz Broz, join Legia as a free agent because they couldn't afford to pay him overdue wages and bonuses.

For promoted clubs Cracovia Krakow and Zawisza Bydgoszcz, the main aim will be to keep themselves above the relegation zone, despite Cracovia's declaration that they "have ambitions to do something more".

Dariusz Kurowski

• *For all this season's Ekstraklasa fixtures, go to www.worldsoccer.com/world-service*

New contract...Mila of Slask

Lech boost...defender Arboleda is fit again after an eight-month injury absence

EKSTRAKLASA CLUBS 2013-14

1 Cracovia Wisa Krakow
2 Gornik Zabrze
3 Jagiellonia Biaystok
4 Korona Kielce
5 Lech Poznan
6 Lechia Gdansk
7 Legia Warsaw
8 Piast Gliwice
9 Podbeskidzie Bielsko-Biaa
10 Pogon Szczecin
11 Ruch Chorzow
12 Slask Wroclaw
13 Widzew Lodz
14 Zaglebie Lubin
15 Zawisza Bydgoszcz

PORTUGAL: PRIMEIRA LIGA

Champions change coach

Hot shot...Porto's Colombian striker Jackson Martinez, in action against Benfica last term

KEY DATES

Season starts
August 18, 2013
Season ends
May 11, 2014

Despite an impressive domestic record in leading Porto to back-to-back championships, Vitor Pereira never won over the club's fans or the board and when his contract expired in June he was not offered a new one.

With the 44-year-old heading off to join Saudi Arabia's Al Ahli, the Portuguese champions turned to Paulo Fonseca – the man who led minnows Pacos de Ferreira to an impressive third place last season. For some, the 40-year-old – who has only coached one top-flight team in his short career – represents something of a gamble. But Porto chairman Pinto Da Costa believes his new recruit has what it takes to follow in the footsteps of others who were unproven before arriving at the club – such as Jose Mourinho, Andre Villas-Boas and Pereira.

Fonseca's biggest challenge will be dealing with the pressure of working for a team that is expected to win every game. Expectations are especially high at the moment after Porto were undefeated in the league last term as they marched towards their eighth title in 10 years.

The new boss must also find a way to adjust to the loss of key players Joao Moutinho and James Rodriguez, who were sold to Monaco for a combined fee of €70 million. As far as replacements are concerned, Mexican midfielder Hector Herrera was brought in from Pachuca and promising winger Lica was signed from Estoril.

The only team to threaten Porto's domestic dominance in recent years has been Benfica and that is likely to be the story once again – if they can find a way to forget about their collapse at the end of the last season.

Promising...big Sporting hope Esgaio

Having lost the league title, the Europa League Final and the Portuguese Cup Final in 15 traumatic days, there was much speculation regarding the future of coach Jorge Jesus. But he has signed a new two-year contract and now hopes to lead them to only their second title in a decade.

Jesus will rely on a large Serbian contingent this season, with new signings Lazar Markovic, Filip Djuricic, Miralem Sulejmani, Stefan Mitrovic and Uros Matic joining Uros' older brother Nemanja in Lisbon. This will mean there are even fewer opportunities for home-grown players at the Stadium of Light, with only midfielders Ruben Amorim and Carlos Martins expected to see regular first-team action.

Following one of the worst campaigns in their history – which ended with the team in seventh place – Sporting Lisbon hope new coach Leonardo Jardim can find a way to steer the club back onto the right path. The man who led Braga to third place in 2012 is back in Portugal following a short stint in Greece with Olympiakos.

Even though Sporting are used to fighting for the title, it may be a while before they can claim their first championship since 2002, with debts of €350m hindering the club's progress. Investment in the transfer market will be limited, with the board hoping youngsters such as Bruma, Ricardo Esgaio and Joao Mario can blossom into stars.

After missing out on a Champions League spot last time out, Braga hope to be contenders for a top-three place once again. They are in a better position than Pacos de Ferreira, who lost their coach and several key players after last term's heroics. Former Porto and Monaco midfielder Costinha has replaced Fonseca, while another former international, Abel Xavier, is also trying his hand at coaching with Olhanense.

> "It's not a risk to hire him. He may still be young, but I have never known anyone who was able to lead a team like Pacos de Ferreira to third in the league"
>
> Porto chairman Pinto Da Costa on new coach Paulo Fonseca

It will be intriguing to see what Belenenses can do after their promotion back to the Primeira Liga. One of only five clubs to have been crowned national champions, they won the second division at a canter last season and boast several talented young home-grown players.

Pedro Pinto

• *For all this season's Primeira Liga fixtures, go to www.worldsoccer.com/world-service*

PRIMEIRA LIGA CLUBS 2013-14

1	Academica	8	Maritimo
2	Arouca	9	Nacional
3	Belenenses	10	Olhanense
4	Benfica	11	Pacos de Ferreira
	Sporting Lisbon	12	Porto
5	Braga	13	Rio Ave
6	Estoril	14	Vitoria Guimaraes
7	Gil Vicente	15	Vitoria Setubal

ROMANIA: LIGA I

Super Cup winners lead the way

Power game...Steaua' captain Bourceanu takes on Petrolul's defence in the Super Cup

KEY DATES

Season starts
July 19, 2013

Season ends
May 21, 2014

Defending champions Steaua Bucharest are favourites to triumph again this term, and they made an impressive start to the new campaign by beating Petrolul Ploiesti 3-0 in the Romanian Super Cup with first-half goals from Stefan Nikolic, Lukasz Szukala and Mihai Pintilii. Steaua skipper Alexandru Bourceanu also had a penalty saved.

Although Steaua will be without last season's 21-goal top scorer Raul Rusescu, who has been sold to Sevilla of Spain for €2.2million, they did manage to keep hold of midfielders Bourceanu and Alexandru Chipciu, defender Vlad Chiriches and goalkeeper Ciprian Tatarusanu despite interest from elsewhere.

Sampdoria's Federico Piovaccari has joined on a season-long loan to replace Rusescu, while coach Laurentiu Reghecampf has also brought in keeper Florin Nita from Concordia Chiajna on a free and under-21 international Nicusor Stanciu from Vaslui for €700,000.

Of the sides most likely to hinder Steaua – rather than being able to offer a serious title challenge – CFR Cluj have injected some fresh impetus with the appointment of former Standard Liege boss Mircea Rednic and a massive clearout. Sixteen of the squad which finished a poor ninth last season have been shown the door. Hopes are high for new arrivals such as on-loan midfielder Damjan Djokovici, and strikers Gregory Tade from St Johnstone and Florin Costea from relegated Turnu Severin.

With all the clubs struggling financially, selling players to earn money is vital for survival.

Italian top-flight new boys Sassuolo paid Dinamo Bucharest to take star player Marius Alexe on loan, while Viitorul Constanta sold Aurelian Chitu to Valenciennes of France for €600,000. Among those who could still move on are Dinamo goalkeeper Cristian Balgradean, who is looking for a move to Spain, and Petrolul striker Jeremy Bokila, who has a long list of French, Italian and Russian clubs chasing him after his 16 goals last term.

One of four promoted sides, Botosani are in Liga I for the first time and become the first team from Botosani County to appear in the Romanian top flight. Founded in 2001, they played in the lower divisions before local businessman Valeriu Iftime came in with an investment plan. And he claims to have once fired a coach while drunk in Moscow. "I couldn't stand a 7-3 defeat, so I had to show him the door by phone," says Iftime. "It was funny, I'd do it again any time."

At the end of last season, Universitatea Cluj and Rapid Bucharest were denied licences to continue in Liga I due to accumulated debt. However, both were thrown a lifeline two weeks before the start of the new season.

Cluj's appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Geneva was approved, so the students' club in Transylvania has been reaccepted – despite the fact that several players and staff members went unpaid for months.

In Rapid's case, the rulers of Romanian football ignored the existing laws, allowing the TV rights holders and sponsors to have the last word in terms of formalities by imposing a play-off against Concordia Chiajna, who finished fourth from bottom. Rapid won 2-1 in extra time and so the new season will now kick off with 18 clubs, despite the FA's initial intention to start with just 17.

Emanuel Rosu

• *For all this season's Liga I fixtures, go to www.worldsoccer.com/world-service*

Steaua have had a one-season ban from European competition deferred by UEFA for a probationary period of five years

New start...Rednic has made changes

Off to Italy...Dinamo's Alexe

LIGA I CLUBS 2013-14

1	Astra Giurgiu		Steaua Bucharest
2	Brasov	7	Gaz Metan Medias
	Corona Brasov	8	Otelul Galati
3	Botosani	9	Pandurii Targu Jiu
4	Ceahlaul Piatra Neamt	10	Petrolul Ploiesti
5	CFR Cluj	11	Poli Timisoara
	Universitatea Cluj	12	Segeata Novodari
6	Dinamo Bucharest	13	Vaslui
	Rapid Bucharest	14	Viitorul Constanta

RUSSIA: PREMIER LEAGUE

Anzhi ambitions have no limits

Back...Congo defender Samba rejoined Anzhi after a brief spell in England with QPR

KEY DATES

Season starts
July 14, 2013

Season ends
May 17, 2014

Russian football's nouveau-riche Anzhi were quick out of the blocks this summer, spending an initial €52million as they bid to build a title-winning side for the first time.

Guus Hiddink's new boys are national team players Alexander Kokorin, Igor Denisov and Alexei Ionov, while promising goalkeeper Mikhail Kerzhakov also arrives along with giant Congolese centre-back Christopher Samba, who returns after a short spell in England with QPR. Hiddink, who extended his contract by a year in June, will now be aided by former Manchester United assistant Rene Meulensteen.

Anzhi owner Suleyman Kerimov has disregarded all possible financial fairplay threats and is clear in his intention to not only change the balance of power domestically but to also make a mark in Europe.

His €19m purchase of Kokorin from Dynamo caused a storm among the Moscow club's fans, Zenit supporters were equally angry at Denisov for leaving in a €15m deal. The 29-year-old national team captain is in for a cold reception when Anzhi visit St Petersburg on August 19.

Last season's double-winners CSKA Moscow, who completed a clean sweep by beating Zenit 3-0 in the Russian Super Cup, have made little impression in the transfer market so far, with Swiss winger Steven Zuber from Grasshoppers and Bulgaria schemer Georgi Milanov of Litex Lovech their only significant purchases so far. They join the Swedish duo of Pontus Vernbloem and Rasmus Elm as well as Alan Dzagoev in midfield. International strikers Vagner Love of Brazil, Ahmed Musa of Nigeria and Ivorian Seydou Doumbia will be alternating up front, giving Leonid Slutskiy plenty of options.

> "This season the bar will again be a little higher. The club wants to settle permanently at the top" Anzhi coach Guus Hiddink

Trio...(from left) Musa, Love and Doumbia

Luciano Spalletti's second-placed Zenit raised eyebrows when they signed veteran midfielders Anatoliy Tymoshchuk and Andrei Arshavin as free agents. The 34-year-old Tymoshchuk returned from Bayern Munich after a four-year spell in Germany, while Arshavin rejoined his home-city club for a second time from Arsenal. Arshavin, now 32, was loaned to Zenit for the 2011-12 season and helped the club win the title but, once the Russian fans' darling, he will have a hard time restoring his reputation after being blamed for the national team's recent failures.

The new "legionnaire rule" in the Russian league may be a headache for a number of clubs. The limit of seven on the pitch at one time stays, but those not eligible to play for Russia are now regarded as foreigners even though they have dual citizenship.

While Kurban Berdyev gets ready for his 13th season in charge of Rubin Kazan, Leonid Kuchuk has left Kuban Krasnodar and replaced Slaven Bilic at Lokomotiv Moscow. Kuban appointed Romanian coach Dorinel Munteanu as their new boss. Terek Grozny parted with their coach, former goalkeeping legend Stanislav Cherchesov, and replaced him with Yuri Krasnozhan. Cherchesov joined Amkar Perm.

Victor Gusev

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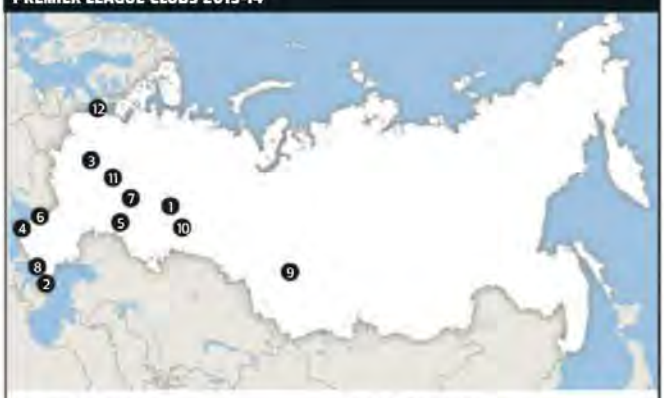
Important...Arshavin has a lot to prove

PREMIER LEAGUE CLUBS 2013-14



1	Amkar Perm	5	Krylia Sovetov Samara
2	Anzhi	6	Rostov
3	CSKA Moscow	7	Rubin Kazan
	Dynamo Moscow	8	Terek Grozny
	Lokomotiv Moscow	9	Tom Tomsk
	Spartak Moscow	10	Ural Sverdlovsk Oblast
4	Krasnodar	11	Volga Nizhny Novgorod
	Kuban Krasnodar	12	Zenit

SCOTLAND: PREMIER LEAGUE

Can anyone stop Celtic?

Photo: SNS Group

Getting stuck in...Celtic's new Dutch defender Van Dijk (left) makes his presence felt in a friendly against Sevastopol in Ukraine

KEY DATES

Season starts
August 3, 2013

Season ends
May 11, 2014

Celtic begin the newly christened Scottish Professional Football League as firm favourites to retain their title, despite the loss of Kenyan midfielder Victor Wanyama to Southampton and top goalscorer Gary Hooper almost certain to follow him down to England.

Manager Neil Lennon has sought to cushion the blow of Hooper's departure with the signing of Portuguese striker Amido Balde from Vitoria Guimaeres, while the rearguard has been bolstered with the signing of Holland Under-21 centre-back Virgil Van Dijk from Groningen.

Motherwell will look to consolidate their position as the best of the rest, but they have been dealt a blow by the loss of PFA player of the year Michael Higdon, who joined NEC Nijmegen in the Dutch Eredivisie.

Leading the line this season will be former Hearts front man John Sutton, while manager Stuart McCall has also signed former Celtic captain Stephen McManus.

Highland rivals Ross County and Inverness Caledonian Thistle have been among the busiest in the market this summer. Derek Adams has promised his County side will be one of the most exciting in the league with four new Dutch players: wingers Darren Maatsen and Melvin De Leeuw, striker Kevin Luckassen and midfielder Marc Klok.

Caley's Terry Butcher has been even busier, signing seven new faces by mid-July, the most intriguing of whom is 20-year-old winger Ben Greenhalgh, who previously earned a contract with Internazionale via a reality TV series but has since pursued a less glamorous career at English non-league side Ebbsfleet United.

Hearts will start as odds-on favourites for relegation, as they begin the season on minus 15 points after being penalised by the league. The Edinburgh club was placed into administration in the summer, with cumulative debts of £25million and has been put up for sale.

There are new bosses in place at St Johnstone and Kilmarnock, where Tommy Wright and Allan Johnston have taken charge respectively.

Killie sacked "heartbroken" manager Kenny Shiels just 12 months after he led the club to the Scottish League Cup because the board felt his frequent touchline bans were bringing the club into disrepute. Johnston was recruited from second division champions Queen of the South.

Dan Brennan

> "We need two or three players if we're going to get back into the Champions League"
>
> Celtic manager Neil Lennon

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Trouble...Hearts start on minus 15 points

PREMIER LEAGUE CLUBS 2013-14

1 Aberdeen
2 Celtic
Partick Thistle
3 Dundee United
4 Hearts
Hibernian
5 Inverness Caledonian Thistle
6 Kilmarnock
7 Motherwell
8 Ross County
9 St Johnstone
10 St Mirren

SERBIA: SUPER LIGA

Can anyone stop Partizan?

Highly rated...Partizan expect 18-year-old striker Mitrovic (right) to make an impact in their new-look side this season

KEY DATES

Season starts
August 10, 2013

Season ends
May 23, 2014

Red Star Belgrade's bid to prevent city rivals Partizan strolling to a seventh successive league title were rocked during the summer by the resignation of coach Ricardo Sa Pinto.

The Portuguese only arrived in March – and he quit in June after realising the club would be unable to keep hold of its most important players, and that he would have little chance of signing adequate replacements.

With Red Star on the verge of bankruptcy and owner Dragan Dzajic having to plead with the ministry of sport for financial aid, new coach Slavisa Stojanovic – a Slovene with Serbian roots who was Slovenia's coach of the year three times from 2006 to 2009 – has set about reshaping the side.

Leaving Red Star are talented central defender Uros Spajic, who was sold to Toulouse of France; holding midfielder Srdjan Mijailovic, who moved to Kayserispor in Turkey; defender Aleksandar Pantic, who joined Spain's Villarreal; and Brazilian playmaker Cadu who signed for Moldova's Sheriff. Last season's captain Nikola Mikic has also left.

In their place come playmaker Milos Ninkovic from Dynamo Kiev, left-back Nikola Mijailovic from Amkar of Russia, Slovenian attacking midfielder Nejc Pecnik from Sheffield Wednesday and centre-forward Djordje Rakic of Qatar's Al Arabi, who were all signed on frees. Rakic, however, will miss the whole of this campaign after suffering a severe knee injury during pre-season.

While Partizan's own financial situation is far from rosy, they have at least been able to keep their heads above water by cashing in on their stars without weakening the squad.

They have sold Lazar Markovic to Benfica for a reported fee of €10million and, with the departure of several other first-teamers, coach Vuk Rasovic starts this season with virtually a new side.

Former players Nikola Aksentijevic (on loan from Vitesse), winger Filip Malbasic (on loan from Hoffenheim) and defensive midfielder Nikola Gulan (a free from Modena), all return to what – apart from 35-year-old captain and playmaker Sasa Ilic – is a mostly young squad. There are high hopes for 18-year-olds Nikola Ninkovic and Aleksandar Mitrovic.

Vojvodina, who finished third last term, were stunned by the sudden death of chairman Ratko Butorovic from a heart attack in early June at the age of 57. He is succeeded by his 24-year-old son, Balsa, who will be advised by former Partizan and Chelsea striker Mateja Kezman. They are joined by a new coach, Marko Nikolic from Rad Belgrade, and sports director Sasa Drakulic.

Serbian Cup winners Jagodina have lost coach Simo Krunic, who joined Dalian Aerbin in China, but they should still be able to battle it out for a European place with ambitious Sloboda Uzice and possibly Rad and OFK Belgrade.

Vladimir Novak

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Rebuilding...Stojanovic is Red Star boss

SUPER LIGA CLUBS 2013-14

1 Cukariki
OFK Belgrade
Partizan Belgrade
Rad Belgrade
Red Star Belgrade
2 Donji Srem
3 Hajduk Kula
4 Jagodina
5 Javor
6 Napredak
7 Novi Pazar
8 Radniki 1923
9 Radniki Nis
10 Sloboda Uzice
11 Spartak Zlatibor Voda
12 Vojvodina

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SPAIN: LA LIGA

Ancelotti rings the changes

Familiar faces...new Real Madrid boss Ancelotti (front) is reunited with former Juventus star Zidane, who will work as his assistant

KEY DATES

Season starts
August 17, 2013

Season ends
May 18, 2014

If there was a button marked "not Mourinho", Carlo Ancelotti pressed it repeatedly. Real Madrid finally presented the Italian as their new coach, beginning a new era at the Santiago Bernabeu and another model too. They were heading in a different direction again. It had been 37 days since the president, Florentino Perez, announced Mourinho would be leaving; now they had the man they wanted to replace him.

Perez had waited a long time for this moment. Twice before he had tried to sign Ancelotti. Third time might have been lucky – but it was not easy.

Paris Saint-Germain had resisted, and in the end Madrid were forced to pay to get their new boss. His assistant, though, was already on the payroll, and Zinedine Zidane will now sit on the bench alongside the man who coached him at Juventus.

By the end of his tenure, Mourinho's enemies had amassed. His position at the club had become unsustainable. Although Perez continued to talk about the special pressure that is brought to bear at the Bernabeu, pointing the finger at outside influence, Ancelotti's presentation made it clear that this was a break from the previous few years.

So too did the goodwill of the media's reaction.

One journalist told the Italian that he had become known as the "peacemaker". It was the first most had heard of it, including Ancelotti himself, but it lent itself to a headline. "I don't think Madrid need a peacemaker and no one has called me that before," the Italian said. "But it's a nice title, so thanks."

Good relations

On one level at least Madrid did need a peacemaker. Or at least that's what they believed. There has been a sense of them trying to find a little "normality", to draw a line under the last year or so. Much of what Ancelotti said seemed tailored to that. He talked about maintaining good relations with the squad, about the importance of Iker Casillas, who had been dropped by Mourinho, and called himself "a coach, nothing more".

Mourinho had been in charge of all first-team affairs and there was much in the message now that broke with then. Ancelotti also insisted on the fact that he likes to work with young players and said that he wants to play spectacular football, based on dominating games and dominating possession.

Standard stuff in a way, but those were accusations levelled against Mourinho. Although his team broke a league goalscoring record and he had reeled off a list of youth teamers given their debut with him, Mourinho had been accused of being defensive, preferring to play on the break, and turning his back on young players. He had also been accused of having a problem with Spaniards – even though his most vociferous backer was Alvaro Arbeloa.

What came next suggested a new direction too. Madrid brought Dani Carvajal back from Germany. Isco then signed from Malaga. And Asier Illaramendi joined from Real Sociedad. The total cost, before the summer transfer market had even reached the half-way stage, was well over €60million. All of them are young, all of them Spanish, and all of them suited to a more patient, technical, possession-based style. Illaramendi and Isco had been two of Spain's standout performers at the summer's Euro Under-21 Championship in Israel.

Madrid and Barcelona strengthened even though they are already miles ahead of the rest. Everyone else did not just stand still, they went backwards. As usual, the most talented footballers elsewhere in the league had a choice: join Madrid or Barcelona or leave the country.

One man bucking the trend was David Villa, who departed Barcelona and joined last year's third-placed finishers Atletico for just over €5m, but his was a special case. It may also have been the exception that proved the rule. He, after all, came to replace Radamel Falcao, who had gone to Monaco.

Sid Lowe

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LA LIGA CLUBS 2013-14

SPAIN: LA LIGA

Team-by-team guide to the season

Eyes on the prize...Demichelis has switched from Malaga to Atletico Madrid

ALMERIA

Coach Francisco Rodriguez
Key arrivals Sebastian Dubarbier (Cordoba, Arg), Suso (Liverpool, Eng, on loan)
Key departures Charles (Celta Vigo)
Beat Las Palmas and Girona in the play-offs to return to La Liga, although coach Javi Gracia and the division's top goalscorer Charles have both left. New boss Rodriguez, who at 34 is now the youngest coach in La Liga, was in charge of the B team last season.

ATHLETIC BILBAO

Coach Ernesto Valverde
Key arrivals Benat Etxebarria (Real Betis), Xabier Etxeita (Elche), Kike Sola (Osasuna)
Key departures Fernando Amorebieta (Fulham, Eng), Fernando Llorente (Juventus, Ita)
Despite the departure of coach Marcelo Bielsa, the loss of Llorente and the demolition of San Mames, there is optimism at Athletic. Valverde is a talented and popular coach who has made excellent additions to the squad.

ATLETICO MADRID

Coach Diego Simeone
Key arrivals Leo Baptistao (Rayo Vallecano), Martin Demichelis (Malaga), Jose Gimenez (Danubio, Uru), David Villa (Barcelona)
Key departures Radamel Falcao (Monaco, Fra), Silvio Pereira (Benfica, Por, on loan)
Simeone has warned that Atletico will not improve unless they strengthen their squad in the wake of Falcao's departure. They have already missed out on Jeremy Toulalan, but Simeone did get Villa and they will be competitive again.

BARCELONA

Coach Tito Vilanova
Key arrivals Neymar (Santos, Bra)
Key departures Thiago Alcantara (Bayern Munich, Ger), Bojan Krkic (Ajax, Hol, on loan), Andreu Fontas (Celta Vigo), Marc Muniesa (Stoke City, Eng), David Villa (Atletico Madrid)
So, can Lionel Messi and Neymar play together? That is the question that most occupies the thoughts of fans as the new season starts. And will Vilanova strengthen the defence? The relative pessimism is curious after a record-breaking season in which they reached 100 points – but that does not mean it is entirely unfounded.

CELTA VIGO

Coach Luis Enrique
Key arrivals Charles (Almeria), Andreu Fontas (Barcelona), Nolito (Benfica, Por), Rafinha (Barcelona, on loan)
Key departures Iago Aspas (Liverpool, Eng), Roberto Lago (Getafe)
Survival on the final day was not enough to keep Abel Resino in a job and he has been replaced by Enrique. There's excitement about Celta, even though the departed Aspas was by far their most important player.

ELCHE

Coach Fran Escriba
Key arrivals Manu Del Mora (Sevilla, on loan), Miroslav Stevanovic (Sevilla, on loan)
Key departures none
Back in the top flight after 25 years, Elche topped the second tier all last season. They have stuck with coach Escriba, who worked as assistant to Quique Sanchez Flores at Atletico.

ESPANYOL

Coach Javier Aguirre
Key arrivals Juan Rafael Fuentes (Cordoba), Abraham Gonzalez (Alcorcon), Manuel Lanzarote (Sabadell)
Key departures Jordi Amat (Swansea City, Eng), Raul Baena (Rayo Vallecano), Joan Verdu (Real Betis)
Aguirre arrived at Espanyol on a rescue mission and led his side to survival with weeks to spare – at which point they promptly stopped winning. The question now is whether he can be as successful with different objectives and construct a team from the start. The loss of Verdu is a big blow to their hopes.

GETAFE

Coach Luis Garcia Plaza
Key arrivals Roberto Lago (Celta Vigo), Pedro Leon (Real Madrid), Oriol Riera (Alcorcon)
Key departures Abdelaziz Barrada (Al Jazira, UAE), Mane (Maccabi Tel Aviv, Isr)
Getafe continue under Garcia with the hope of being able to take that small step that converts mid-table safety into European football. They are likely to turn to young on-loan signings from other big clubs, following a formula that has proven relatively successful before.

Striking for Celta...Charles

GRANADA

Coach Lucas Alcaraz
Key arrivals Yacine Brahimi (Rennes, Fra), Manuel Iturra (Malaga), Ivan Kelava (Dinamo Zagreb, Cro), Piti (Rayo Vallecano), Riki (Deportivo La Coruna)
Key departures Silvan Widmer (Udinese, Ita)
Alcaraz's arrival saw the club survive comfortably last season and by the end of the campaign they were a team that was nice to watch too. Although on-loan Nolito has gone, the arrival of Iturra and Piti offers hope.

LEVANTE

Coach Joaquin Caparros
Key arrivals David Barral (Orduspor, Tur), Issam El Adoua (Guimaraes, Por), Andreas Ivanschitz (Mainz, Ger), Javi Jimenez (Real Murcia), Jordi Xumetra (Elche)
Key departures Sergio Ballesteros (released), Jose Barkero (released), Michel (Valencia), Gustavo Munua (Fiorentina, Ita)
Levante have been marked by the match-fixing allegations that exploded at the end of last season, with Barkero and captain Ballesteros both leaving.

MALAGA

Coach Bernd Schuster
Key arrivals Vitorino Antunes (Pacos Ferreira, Por), Flavio Ferreira (Academica, Por), Roque Santa Cruz (Manchester City, Eng)
Key departures Martin Demichelis (Atletico Madrid), Isco (Real Madrid), Manuel Iturra (Granada), Joaquin (Fiorentina, Ita), Jeremy Toulalan (Monaco, Fra)
Former coach Manuel Pellegrini, Isco, Toulalan and Iturra have all departed with more likely to come as Malaga's restructuring continues

in compliance with Financial Fair Play and the drying up of money from Sheikh Al Thani.

OSASUNA

Coach Jose Luis Mendilibar
Key arrivals Jordan Loties (Nancy, Fra)
Key departures Kike Sola (Athletic Bilbao)
Mendilibar and veteran captain Patxi Punal are still there, but there have been important exits, such as that of Sola. "I don't think we have signed stars so the objective next season is clearly survival and the sooner the better," says Punal.

RAYO VALLECANO

Coach Paco Jemez
Key arrivals Raul Baena (Espanyol), Nery Castillo (Pachuca, Mex)
Key departures Leo Baptistao (Atletico Madrid), Alejandro Dominguez (Olympiakos, Gre), Javier Fuego (Valencia), Piti (Granada)
Last season's revelations, despite financial crisis and administrators watching over their every move, saw Rayo playing brave, attacking football. However, a lot of players have left this summer and Jemez must start all over again.

REAL BETIS

Coach Pepe Mel
Key arrivals Stephan Andersen (Evian, Fra), Cedric (Numancia), Chuli (Recreativo Huelva), Juanfran

Kitted out...Real Betis recruit Cedric

(Real Madrid), Lorenzo Reyes (Huachipato, Chl), Markus Steinhoefer (Basel, Swi), Joan Verdu (Espanyol)
Key departures Adrian (West Ham United, Eng), Benat Etxebarria (Athletic Bilbao), Jose Canas (Swansea City, Eng), Alejandro Pozuelo (Swansea, Eng)
Mel has done a superb job at Betis and although the loss of Benat and others are significant too (Canas and Adrian played important roles last season), there is optimism as they prepare for a return to Europe.

REAL MADRID

Coach Carlo Ancelotti
Key arrivals Dani Carvajal (Bayer Leverkusen, Ger), Casemiro (Sao Paulo, Bra), Asier Illarramendi (Real Sociedad), Isco (Malaga)
Key departures Jose Callejon (Napoli, Ita), Ricardo Carvalho (Monaco, Fra), Pedro Leon (Getafe)

Capital gains...European Under-21 Championship star Isco has joined Real Madrid

The Ancelotti era begins with a different look to the Madrid side. Isco is an exciting signing who points to a different approach this season and there is a desire at the Bernabeu to turn the page quickly and move on from the reign of Jose Mourinho.

REAL SOCIEDAD

Coach Jagoba Arrasate
Key arrivals Jose Angel (Roma, Ita, on loan), Haris Seferovic (Fiorentina, Ita)
Key departures Asier Illarramendi (Real Madrid)
Arguably Spain's most impressive side last season when they played swift, technically accomplished football and clinched a first Champions League place in a decade. Few are concerned at the departure of coach Philippe Montanier, but the loss of Illaramendi is a real shame.

SEVILLA

Coach Unai Emery
Key arrivals Carlos Bacca (Club Brugge, Blg), Beto (Braga, Por), Daniel Carrico (Reading, Eng, on loan), Jairo (Racing Santander), Marko Marin (Chelsea, Eng, on loan), Nicolas Pareja (Spartak Moscow, Rus, on loan), Raul Rusescu (Steaua Bucharest), Vitolo (Las Palmas)
Key departures Luis Alberto (Liverpool, Eng), Jose Campana (Crystal Palace, Eng), Antonio Luna (Aston Villa, Eng), Jesus Navas (Manchester City, Eng), Alvaro Negredo (Manchester City, Eng), Andres Palop (Leverkusen, Ger), Emir Spahic (Leverkusen, Ger)
When he took over as coach, Emery gave Sevilla some of the competitiveness and organisation they had lacked – at home, at least. Away from home they won just once and the days of challenging at the top have gone. The sale of Navas leaves a huge gap.

VALENCIA

Coach Miroslav Djukic
Key arrivals Javier Fuego (Rayo Vallecano), Michel (Levante), Oriol Romeu (Chelsea, Eng, on loan), Nelson Valdez (Rubin Kazan, Rus)
Key departures none
Valencia have a new president and a new coach, and although the economic situation remains drastic they are talking about trying to compete at the very highest level and resisting big name sales. Djukic is a popular and impressive boss who will still have one of the strongest squads in the country at his disposal, even though there will be departures.

VALLADOLID

Coach Juan Ignacio Martinez
Key arrivals Zakarya Bergdich (Lens, Fra), Gilberto Garcia (Once Caldas, Col)
Key departures none
Although they largely went under the radar, Valladolid were worth watching last season. On a limited budget, they stayed up with some comfort and performed admirably, quick on the break and occasionally expansive.

Sevilla capture...Romanian Rusescu

VILLARREAL

Coach Marcelino
Key arrivals Giovani Dos Santos (Mallorca), Aleksandar Pantic (Red Star Belgrade, Ser), Tomas Pina (Mallorca)
Key departures Jonathan De Guzman (Swansea City, Eng, on loan), Olof Mellberg (Copenhagen, Den), Marcos Senna (New York Cosmos, USA), Cristian Zapata (Milan, Ita)
Although not exactly rolling in ready cash, the club do have a financial and social stability that means that they should stay up. Senna promised to help the side back into La Liga and he kept his word before heading off to the United States.

SWITZERLAND: SUPER LEAGUE

Basle to maintain status quo

Happier times...Sion celebrate a goal against Marseille in a pre-season tournament

KEY DATES

Season starts
July 13, 2013

Season ends
May 17, 2014

The Swiss Super League has settled into a fairly predictable routine over the past few seasons. As a result, you can be fairly sure that Sion will hire and fire coaches as if there is no tomorrow, at least one club will flirt with financial catastrophe, hooligans will continue to run riot and, at the end of it all, Basle will win the title.

Last season was fairly typical as Sion fired five coaches, Servette struggled to pay their bills, the Swiss Cup Final was marred by violence in Berne city centre and Basle, after a shaky opening half of the campaign, won the league for the fourth time in a row. The only surprise was Grasshoppers ending their 10-year wait for a trophy by winning the Cup.

Potential...Basle's Salah

So will 2013-14 be any different? On the financial side, the league is hopeful that stricter licensing regulations – introduced after Neuchatel Xamax were kicked out 18 months ago – will avoid any more similar embarrassments.

And stricter segregation of supporters and a ban on alcohol at high-risk games may help combat hooliganism, although Switzerland still lags behind other European countries, partly because of the highly decentralised cantonal system.

As for Sion and Basle, things appear set to continue where they left off last term.

So long as eccentric extreme skier, architect and former goalkeeper Christian Constantin is in charge, Sion will continue to be a source of endless amusement or embarrassment, depending on which way you look at it.

Constantin has ditched more than 30 coaches since he came back for a second stint as club president in 2002 and it is unlikely to take more than a few bad results to set the merry-go-round in motion once again. Michel Decastel, fired early in last season's campaign and then re-hired near the end, will start this season in the hot seat.

Strongest squad

As for Basle, a fifth consecutive title would seem well within their grasp. The club has by far the strongest squad in the country, with a total market value of around £38million, an average attendance of 28,000 and sound finances.

Last season was something of a transitional period as Xherdan Shaqiri and Granit Xhaka headed for the Bundesliga, and Alexander Frei called time on his playing career, but after a tricky opening the team came out of it stronger than ever.

Goalkeeper Yann Sommer is maturing into an international-class player and Austrian defender Aleksander Dragovic has come on in leaps and bounds.

The jewel in the crown, though, is 20-year-old Mohamed Salah, an exciting player who showed his potential by scoring a hat-trick for Egypt in their recent World Cup qualifying win in Zimbabwe. Basle are quite happy for him to use them as a springboard for a move to a bigger club, but they will probably want to keep him for at least another season before cashing in.

Grasshoppers will start the campaign under German coach Michael Skibbe after Uli Forte, who led them to the runners-up spot and victory in the Swiss Cup last term, decided to accept the challenge of trying to resurrect Young Boys.

However, Skibbe's recent record is not exactly glowing. He was fired by Eintracht Frankfurt after less than two years in 2011, then had six months at Eskisehirspor before quitting for Hertha Berlin, where he was fired after five matches and five defeats. He later returned to Turkey for six months at Karabukspor.

Forte, meanwhile, clearly prefers the prospect of trying to lead Young Boys to a first league title since 1986. Having finished runners-up three times in a row between 2008 and 2010, the club from the capital have lost their way and were a dismal seventh last season as they missed out on a place in Europe.

St Gallen, who surpassed expectations by finishing third on their top-flight return last season, may find life harder after selling Argentinian Ezequiel Scarione, last season's top scorer with 21 goals, to Turkish club Kasimpasa.

Aarau, who are back in the top flight after an absence of three seasons, look set to rely on the team which hauled them out of the Challenge League under coach Rene Weiler.

Basle's third place in 2009 was their worst ever finish since the Swiss Super League began in 2003

Brian Homewood

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SUPER LEAGUE CLUBS 2013-14

1 Aarau
2 Basle
3 Grasshoppers Zurich
4 Lausanne-Sport
5 Lucerne
6 Sion
7 St Gallen
8 Thun
9 Young Boys

UKRAINE: PREMIER LEAGUE

Dynamo can close the gap

Welcome...Fred is one of three new Brazil internationals to have joined Shakhtar Donetsk during the summer

KEY DATES

Season starts
July 12, 2013

Season ends
May 16, 2014

After four successive league titles, Shakhtar Donetsk's hegemony could be under real threat this season from Dynamo Kiev.

Having lost Willian in the winter break last term, when the Brazilian joined Anzhi in Russia, coach Mircea Lucescu saw influential holding Brazilian midfielder Fernandinho sign for Manchester City during the summer. Romanian left-back Razvan Rat also went to England, joining West Ham United, and then Armenia striker Henrikh Mkhitaryan left for Borussia Dortmund of Germany.

Velez Sarsfield striker Facundo Ferreyra, Metalurh Donetsk defender Olexander Volovyk and a trio of Brazil internationals – Fernando from Gremio, midfielder Fred of Internacional and Fluminense forward Wellington Nem – have been recruited. Fred made an immediate impact, scoring twice as Shakhtar beat Chornomorets 3-1 in the Ukrainian Super Cup.

However, Dynamo look to have had the edge in the transfer market. They picked up Holland right-winger Jeremain Lens on a four-year deal from PSV and he has already been extremely positive about the move.

"Dynamo's infrastructure impressed me very much, especially the 70,000-capacity stadium," says the 25-year-old. "The club is very ambitious. I think we can fight for the title and go far in the Europa League."

> "I will do my best to help this club succeed and fulfil its goal of winning the Champions League"
>
> Shakhtar Donetsk's new signing Fred

Lens is joined by powerful Congolese striker Dieumerci Mbokani from Anderlecht, Morocco midfielder Younes Belhanda of Montpellier and left-back Benoit Tremoulinas from Bordeaux.

"We are serious about winning the league this season," says owner Ihor Surkis. "[Coach] Oleg Blokhin asked me to reinforce the back line, to be fully equipped, and I promised him money without a minute of hesitation."

Having qualified for the Champions League, Metalist Kharkiv were surprisingly quiet on the transfer front, although 25-year-old Brazilian defender Moledo of Internacional and Shakhtar's Olexander Noyok have joined. The club also prolonged club captain Xavier's contract until 2017, despite him suffering a serious injury in a pre-season friendly.

"We have quite a balanced team," says Metalist sports director Eugen Krasnikov. "There was no need to buy a group of new players this summer. We need quality rather quantity."

Spanish coach Juande Ramos will also make do with much the same squad as last season at Dnipro. They will be looking for a European place again, along with Chornomorets, who picked up midfielder Rinar Valeyev and experienced Russian forward Sergey Samodin from Kryvbass after they were declared bankrupt and lost their place in the top flight.

Hoverla Uzhhorod and Metalurh Zaporizhya, also relegated at the end of last season, were reprieved after too few clubs from the second tier applied for promotion.

Karpaty Lviv look also look set for another battle at the bottom after financial problems forced them to put all 20 members of the playing staff on the transfer list.

Oleg Zadernovsky

• For all this season's Premier League fixtures, go to www.worldsoccer.com/world-service

New deal...Metalist skipper Xavier

PREMIER LEAGUE CLUBS 2013-14

1 Arsenal Kiev
Dynamo Kiev
2 Chornomorets
3 Dnipro
4 Hoverla Uzhhorod
5 Illichivets Mariupol
6 Karpaty Lviv
7 Metalist Kharkiv
8 Metalurh Donetsk
Shakhtar Donetsk
9 Metalurh Zaporizhya
10 Sevastopol
11 Tavriya Simferopol
12 Vorskla Poltava
13 Volyn Lutsk
14 Zorya Luhansk

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Facetoface

JAVIER ZANETTI

"I'd like to carry on for two, maybe three, more years – if my body allows it"

Despite rupturing his Achilles tendon at the end of April and turning 40 in August, Internazionale captain Javier Zanetti has signed a one-year contract extension with the Serie A club

When your Achilles tendon snapped last season did you think that was it?
Not at all. I knew it was my tendon, but the first thing that went through my mind was the following calculation: if I go under the surgeon's knife tomorrow, then by October I'll be able to run again.

After the injury, you got loads of messages of support. Which was the one that surprised you most?
The one from David Beckham. I've played against him a lot of times, but he's not a friend of mine. He wrote: "Don't worry, I had the same injury. You'll be back stronger than ever." And then – but this is not a surprise – there was the one from Jose Mourinho. He was one of the very first people to call.

Is the fact that Mourinho still continues to stay in touch with you and other players not counter-productive for the team? Is it not better to make a clean break?
It's impossible to be too far from him, he's still part of us and he will be forever. Now he's rejoined Chelsea, but I think that, sooner or later, he'll be back here. I strongly doubt, though, that I'll still be on the pitch when that happens!

So how long do you think you can play on for? One more year?
Maybe two years, or maybe even three, if my body allows me to. I've read Stanley Matthews won the Ballon d'Or at 41. If it wasn't for Messi, I could think about it.

Speaking of Lionel Messi, who is better: him or Diego Maradona?
Based on what he has done, and above all for the consistency levels he has reached, Messi has surpassed Diego. Leo is the greatest.

Who has been the most difficult opponent to mark?
I have two names for you: Ryan Giggs and Kaka, when he was at Milan. Both of them were devastating. Ryan is a peer of mine and I admire him a lot.

Who has been the funniest team-mate you've had?
That's an easy one: Taribo West.

Your young team-mate Mateo Kovacic is causing a lot of excitement at the moment. Is he the best youngster you've seen in your 18 years at Inter?
With the exception of Ronaldo, who arrived here when he was 21 (Kovacic is 19), yes. Mateo is the most promising. He "exploded" in what was a very difficult season for us. He has enormous skills; now he just has to confirm that potential, to grow up. But you should bear in mind that in my time here I've not seen that many youngsters. In the past, we used to buy fully formed players, whereas now we're taking a gamble on the kids. I like this philosophy.

Which coach did you have the hardest relationship with?
Well, let's say that I didn't have a good relationship with Marco Tardelli.

What do you make of the booing directed at Mario Balotelli recently? Is it a case of racism, or is it a case of Mario paying for his own arrogance?
Mario has a very peculiar temperament and I can understand that the opposition fans don't like him. To whistle him is OK, but those howls are pure racism and must be punished.

Which Milan player would you most like to have had at Inter?
Paolo Maldini. But he was a *Rossoneri* icon. He's a friend of mine, but I wouldn't even have bothered trying to convince him to join us.

If you follow the transfer market rumours, you'll be reading that Inter are chasing players for your right-back position: Dusan Basta, Bacary Sagna, Juan Zuniga...are you ready to spend the next season on the substitutes' bench?
If it means helping Inter, I'd happily sit on the bench. The most important thing is to get back to fitness so I can get back to playing again.

Is there any truth in the reports that there is a seat waiting for you as coach at Inter?
That's bullshit. As is the talk of the "asado agreement", which suggests that Argentinians rule the dressing room and the club. I am able to give my opinion if the club's president, Massimo Moratti, calls me, but anyone who thinks that I influence his choices overestimates my role and underestimates him.

So what would you like to do once you finish your playing career?
I'd like to be the link between the squad and the president, the one you guys in the media like to call "the strong man".

Interview by Dan Brennan

New men, new strategies

Managerial changes at the Premier League's top three clubs will make for a fascinating season, says Jonathan Wilson

All change...new managers (from left) Mourinho, Pellegrini and Moyes could find themselves battling in a far more open Premier League this season

In a world in which the rich are getting even richer and success seems increasingly the preserve of a select handful of clubs, this season's Premier League promises a rare openness, with the big three of Manchester United, Manchester City and Chelsea all changing manager. It is an instability that could just open the door for Arsenal, Tottenham Hotspur and, with a couple more signings, perhaps Liverpool.

For David Moyes, Manuel Pellegrini and Jose Mourinho there are tactical issues to be addressed. And it says much for the globalised nature of the modern game that the one whose approach seems most attuned to how his new side played last season is the one with no Premier League experience: Pellegrini.

With Moyes, of course, the comparison isn't entirely fair, for it is not comparing like with like to look at how he played with Everton and imagine that approach mapped on to United. Moyes did wonders on a restricted budget at Goodison Park, and if his team's football was at times more rugged or more defensive than United fans would like – even, at times, more than Everton fans were happy with – then the pragmatism was at least understandable in context.

Moyes played 4-4-2 or 4-4-1-1 (the difference between which is often in the eye of the beholder) in the vast majority of his games in charge of Everton. It's not a huge leap from that to the 4-2-3-1 United played most of last season – and in many games United played a 4-4-1-1/4-2-3-1 hybrid with Wayne Rooney advanced of the two wide creators.

> "It's very important to think and to play as a big team, and try to always play – not just score a goal and then play on the counter-attack"
>
> Manchester City manager Manuel Pellegrini

At Everton, Moyes was flexible enough that at times – admittedly, usually because of injury – he would play Tim Cahill as a false nine. His side often played quite narrow through the midfield, with Steven Pienaar tucked in on the left to allow Leighton Baines to overlap, with either Kevin Mirallas, Steven Naismith or, occasionally, Leon Osman on the right – all of them players who naturally drift infield.

At United, Moyes' wide options – Antonio Valencia, Nani, Ashley Young, Danny Welbeck and Shinji Kagawa – are all more inclined to stay high and wide, so that will require an adjustment on Moyes' part.

More significant than the shape, though, is the style. Only Newcastle United and Fulham played more long balls per game than the 64 that Everton recorded last season, while only Manchester City, Arsenal and Southampton played fewer than the 59 per game recorded by United. There are, of course, reasons for this: Everton come under pressure and have to clear their lines quickly more often than United, and their midfield is not as technically accomplished. But that is just another

Forceful...Toure (above) will find his Manchester City workload eased by newcomer Fernandinho

adjustment Moyes will have to make. And that, in a sense, is the problem of appointing a manager who has experience of the Premier League but not of working at a club that expects to win every game and whose fans demand that their side takes the initiative.

Pellegrini has the opposite problem. He has coached regularly in the Champions League – and achieved remarkable results with Villarreal and Malaga – but has no experience of the Premier League.

History is not exactly awash with 59-year-olds who have moved into a new culture and prospered, but English football is less idiosyncratic now than it was when, say, the 54-year-old Slovak coach Jozef Venglos took over at Aston Villa for one miserable season in 1990.

Pellegrini takes charge of a well-balanced squad with a rare mix of physical and technical attributes that has undergone sensible remodelling over the summer. The arrival of Fernandinho should lessen the burden on Yaya Toure as the more progressive of the two midfield holders, while Jesus Navas offers pace and penetration wide. City chief executive Ferran Soriano had promised "three or four" big-name signings, insisting that the focus this term would be on making the squad better rather than bigger – an acknowledgement that the transfer dealing of last summer had been flawed. So far he has delivered on that, with centre-forward Alvaro Negredo the third signing, and Stevan Jovetic being lined up from Fiorentina.

Holistic approach

There was much mockery of City's hierarchy for explaining that Roberto Mancini had been sacked because they wanted a more "holistic" approach, although it's hard to know why. It surely makes sense for every section of a club to be pulling in the same direction, and the appointment of Pellegrini is part of that. At Malaga, his preferred system was a 4-2-3-1, while at Villarreal he tended to use a 4-2-3-1 or a 4-4-1-1 with two holding players. City's squad seems ideally suited to playing that way, with two of Gareth Barry, Toure, Javi Garcia, Fernandinho and Jack Rodwell sitting, and two of Samir Nasri, James Milner, David Silva and Navas wide.

Mourinho is unusual in offering both top-level Champions League and Premier League experience. Instead, the issue surrounding him, as so often at Chelsea where owner Roman Abramovich has consistently eschewed anything resembling a holistic or consistent policy, is that the players in the squad don't necessarily fit with his preferred style of play. The 4-2-3-1 shape the squad lends itself to is the same as the one he employed at Real Madrid – even if he did prefer a 4-3-3 in his previous stint at the club.

Width...Welbeck gives United options

Interim boss Rafa Benitez did instil a certain discipline at Chelsea last season – in some ways his greatest achievement was transforming Eden Hazard into a player who tracked back – and Oscar is as hard-working a central creator as there is, but this is still a squad made up primarily of neat, technical players rather than the more muscular figures Mourinho has traditionally preferred. Certainly if John Obi Mikel leaves, there is desperate need of an enforcer at the back of midfield.

And that really is the fascination of this season: of the three arrivals on the benches of the big clubs, Pellegrini seems the new manager best suited to his squad, yet he is also the one least familiar with English football. WS

Keir Radnedge

THE INSIDER

The expert view on events off the pitch

Protests highlight Brazilian dilemma

The people want social reform but it won't be in place in time for the World Cup finals

Strident voice...demonstrators take to the streets in Sao Paulo during the Confederations Cup and call for social welfare reform

Sepp Blatter would be able to offer Dilma Rousseff a little advice: when it comes to the R-word, talk is easy and achievement is not only problematic but time-consuming. Next year, ahead of FIFA Congress, and then again ahead of the World Cup, the talk will still be about "reform".

At the 2013 Confederations Cup in Brazil the two main targets – both individual and corporate – for protesters had plenty in common. This is why the unified sight of the presidents of FIFA and Brazil made such an irresistible target for fans' ire at the opening ceremony in Brasilia.

FIFA had been a focus for fierce attack ever since the corruption revelations that erupted into public consciousness in 2010 and have raced on with one scandal after another, including the age-old ISL case. Hence Blatter, with his own credibility in danger, launched the reform process in May 2011.

That process continues, and much has been achieved, but much still remains to be done to convince sceptics that FIFA cares about its image.

Days before the start of the Confederations Cup, popular protests were sparked in Sao Paulo over a proposal to increase bus fares. Within days, the launch of the Confed Cup – with all the attendant publicity about the costs involved – poured fuel on the fire.

Suddenly protest marches were erupting all over Brazil, with hundreds of thousands – if not millions – on the streets in more than one hundred cities, towns and local communities. Rousseff's government, the military police and FIFA were all caught on the back foot by a popular rising that came from nowhere.

Initially the protests were reported as targeting FIFA and the World Cup, but that was simplistic. Brazil is a country whose fast-growing economy has spawned an equally fast-growing and newly educated middle class. Young people taught to think for themselves have learned to reject blind acceptance of the old stereotypes and inequalities within their society.

For the first time in the two decades, since the return to democratic rule, the streets were alive with demands for more improvements and at a far greater speed, in living standards. At least three deaths were directly attributable: a teenager was killed in Ribeirao Preto, 200 miles from Sao Paulo after a car hit a crowd of demonstrators, then a woman died from tear gas inhalation in Belem, and a young man fell to his death off a bridge in Belo Horizonte.

Insufficient spending

What the Confederation/World Cups have done is signal a standard by which social welfare spending was judged to be insufficient.

Sports minister Aldo Rebelo protested in vain that the stadia were financed by private finance or state loans, and that it all added up to a drop in the ocean compared with the country's social welfare budget. The demonstrators demanded "FIFA-standard" education and health care.

Cynics believe government loans for at least half the 12 stadia will be converted – after the circus has left town – into grants and that protesters will be proved correct to be distrustful.

As the football itself began – entertainingly, attractively and safely – so Rousseff responded to the street protests with emollient words. These contrasted enormously with the violent rhetoric with which Turkey's prime minister, Recep Erdogan, responded to protests in Istanbul.

> "Things seem to be moving forward and the government seems to be responding to the people's calls"
>
> 2002 World Cup-winner Ronaldo tries to put a positive spin on the protests

Rousseff sought to puncture the bubble of anger with promises of a plebiscite for political reform and tighter anti-corruption legislation.

But it will take six months to organise a plebiscite, and at least as long probably to bring forward formal legislation – which means nothing will have changed in practical terms by the time FIFA and the World Cup are back in Brazil next year.

Brazil's own players and coaches trod a sensitive path. They backed the right of the masses to march in peaceful protest

while disapproving the hooligan violence which provoked some of the tear-gas fuelled, panicky police response.

Ronaldo, the 2002 World Cup-winner and organising committee "face", was derided for early naive comments that football tournaments were built "with stadia not hospitals".

Later he signalled a volte-face in telling the local and international media: "I fully support the demonstrations because the Brazilian people were tired of the situation that we face. However, walking around the streets and talking to people I realised that Brazilians are not against the World Cup or the Confederations Cup: Brazilians are against corruption, embezzlement and the way the health system has been

Change...Ronaldo was forced to revise his early naive comments against the protests

managed and the education system has been managed.

"It's been wonderful to see Brazilians really rise up against this situation and to see that most demonstrations have been peacefully asking for change in Brazil."

One great irony was that the protests brought far greater worldwide visibility to the Confederations Cup than it has ever enjoyed in all of its two previous decades put together.

The Final, in which the hosts trounced Spain 3-0, highlighted the Brazilian public's schizophrenic mood as 70,000 roared on their team inside Maracana while an equal number marched in protest in the city and streets outside. Rousseff, with her popularity ratings collapsing, stayed away altogether.

The demonstrators had hoped to join forces at or near the statue of Luiz Bellini, Brazil's first World Cup-winning captain in 1958, outside the main entrance to Maracana. However, the street was blocked off by riot police, supported by the armoured personnel carriers used in clearance actions against the *favelas*.

At no time did FIFA consider cancelling or abandoning the Confed Cup. However, the delicacy of the knife-edge on which it all balanced was revealed the day after the final by World Cup liaison minister Luis Fernandes.

"Staging a successful Confederations Cup was achieved under extraordinary conditions which were far from normal," said Fernandes.

"I don't mean the demonstrations, because this is a right all citizens have, but the effects of violence undertaken by some people who infiltrated the demonstrations. They tried to hurt our plans and tried to jeopardise the security of all the participants.

"So I believe that to conclude the Cup without any severe incidents when it came to security for the participants – be they players or officials or technical staff or referees or fans – has been a great achievement."

Rekindled optimism

Brazil could also reflect on proof of a football achievement. Victory over Spain rekindled optimism ahead of the World Cup. And that optimism was reflected in the subsequent FIFA world ranking.

Luiz Felipe Scolari's success in all their five Confed games lifted Brazil to ninth. Previously they had slumped to a lowest-ever 22nd partly because, as World Cup hosts, they lacked the competition advantage available to countries in the qualifying competition.

Also, just after the Final, FIFA said it was delaying a proposed announcement about ticket pricing for the finals.

Secretary-general Jerome Valcke insisted this was due entirely to logistical issues. But it said everything about the manner in which the World Cup costs debate had run out of control that the announcement was greeted with scepticism.

Just like reform, turning around such cynicism cannot be achieved within a year. With 2014 in mind, Blatter should warn Rousseff. He knows all about it. WS

In charge...Dirk Broichhausen, the managing director of GoalControl

Happy techies

The German goal-line technology (GLT) system GoalControl will almost certainly be retained for the World Cup in Brazil despite having had nothing to decide during the Confederations Cup.

The system was a latecomer to the licensing system set up after the International Football Association Board finally approved GLT last summer.

It overtook original pioneers such as Hawk-Eye and Cairos to earn the nod for the Cup, and FIFA secretary-general Jerome Valcke has indicated it will be maintained back in Brazil next year.

Valcke said: "The agreement with GoalControl was to see how it worked at the Confederations Cup.

"The feedback was that it worked well so why change?"

The cost of installing the system in Brazil for the 12 venues at the World Cup will be £2million. FIFA has offered to leave the systems in place if the CBF or host clubs wish. They would be responsible only for the ongoing maintenance costs.

England's Howard Webb, one of the Confederations Cup referees, was happy with the system.

Webb, who refereed Brazil's 2-0 win over Mexico, then Spain's semi-final victory over Italy on penalties, said: "Of course we had nothing to compare it with, it's been our first experience of goal-line technology. But the reassurance the system gives us is a big benefit. We've had no concerns about the reliability of the system."

The first FIFA event to use GLT was the Club World Cup in Japan last December, when Hawk-Eye and GoalRef were deployed without need or problem.

Talentscout

Alvaro MORATA

CLUB	Real Madrid
COUNTRY	Spain
POSITION	Forward
AGE	20 (23.10.92)
HONOURS	2013 Euro Under-21s, 2011 Euro Under-19s

Alvaro Morata, the top scorer for Spain as they won this summer's European Under-21 Championship in Israel, was the archetypal supersub. He scored four goals in five matches, leaving the bench for a spot of opportune end-of-game lock-picking to secure the points.

Whenever Julen Lopetegui's side needed the momentum to swing their way, the coach would turn swiftly to the Real Madrid frontman to help Spain retain their under-21 crown.

Top scorer with six goals when Spain won the Euro Under-19s in 2011, Morata was the essence of time and motion efficiency throughout Israel 2013.

> "The president told me I will stay at Real Madrid this season. He is very happy with me" Alvaro Morata

In Spain's opener against Russia he headed home the only goal of the game less than 20 minutes after entering the fray. He then came off the bench against Germany and again scored the only goal of the game, securing all three points in the final four minutes. In the starting line-up for the last group game, versus Holland, he was on target once more in a 3-0 victory, before getting on the scoresheet as a second-half substitute in the 3-0 semi-final victory over Norway.

Because of his power in the air, his ability as an attacking pivot, good movement and a sheer hunger for goals, Morata often has been compared to former Real Madrid and Spain centre-forward Fernando Morientes. But even more satisfying for the youngster are the clear similarities between his career and that of his boyhood hero: Madrid legend Raul.

Golden boy...Morata celebrates scoring his fourth goal of the Euro Under-21s this summer, in Spain's 3-0 semi-final victory over Norway

Both strikers passed through the Atletico Madrid academy, both made their Real Madrid senior debuts at Zaragoza's La Romareda stadium – Morata's La Liga bow coming back in December 2010 – and both have had the honour of being the top scorer at a European Under-21 finals (Raul finishing top of the competition's goal-grabbing charts in 1996).

Having joined Real from Getafe as a youth, in a perfect world he will become a fully fledged member of the club's first-team squad this season. To do so, he just has to hope that he does not suffer the perennial problem of all Bernabeu *cantera* (graduates): the big-name squeeze.

Nick Bidwell

Leo BAPTISTAO

CLUB	Atletico Madrid (Spa)
COUNTRY	Brazil
POSITION	Forward
AGE	20 (26.08.92)
PREVIOUS CLUB	Rayo Vallecano (Spa)

A one-time member of the Sao Paulo state club Portuguesa Santista, nine-year-old Leo played in the same indoor side as the 10-year-old Neymar and the pair remain good friends to this day.

But while the future star of Brazilian football made his name at home before moving to Barcelona this summer, Baptistao left for Spain as a 16-year-old.

Sidelined with hepatitis shortly after arriving at Rayo Vallecano, he has been extremely unlucky with injuries – when a snapped collarbone brought last season to a premature end in April it was his third such break.

Used either as a striker or in a slightly more withdrawn role, he shares many characteristics with Real Madrid and Brazil attacking midfielder Kaka. Humble and modest, with great ball control, he too has a middle-class background, with his father being a doctor.

When Rayo sold Michu to Swansea City last year, some thought it was the act of a club with a death-wish. Yet, thanks in no small part to the Brazilian rookie, the club from the capital district of Vallecas went from strength to strength and finished in eighth place in La Liga.

> "Leo was a breath of fresh air that no one expected. He's a fabulous kid"
>
> Rayo Vallecano coach Paco Jemez

Despite that fractured collarbone against Mallorca, Atletico Madrid saw enough last term to warrant signing him for a reported €6million in June.

Nick Bidwell

Winner...Baptistao (in white) scored against his new side Atletico Madrid in February

Delight...Alvarez celebrates scoring against Quilmes in only his fourth first-team game

Eder ALVAREZ

CLUB	River Plate (Arg)
COUNTRY	Colombia
POSITION	Defender
AGE	20 (28.02.93)
PREVIOUS CLUB	Academia

A coach of River Plate might normally feel uneasy about selecting a centre-back with just four games under his belt for the trip across town to face arch-rivals Boca Juniors. But Ramon Diaz had no such qualms about the 20-year-old Colombian in April. And 90 minutes and a 1-1 draw later, Argentina's sports daily *Ole* named him man of the match – just as he has been in almost every game since his debut.

Secure both on the ground and in the air, he comes from a footballing family – his father played for Santa Fe reserves in Bogota, while an uncle turned out for Millonarios – and he began his career as a central midfielder with the now defunct Academia. In early 2011, his agent Silvano Espindola – who also had a hand in Radamel Falcao starting off with River Plate – took him to Argentina, where River moved him to centre-back.

Although a member of the squad that won the 2012 Under-20 Libertadores title, it was still a huge surprise when Diaz threw him into the first team, even if the club's defensive resources were depleted by injuries and suspensions.

Of course, there are areas of his play that need improvement.

> "There's a bit of Daniel Passarella in him. He's strong, left-footed and wants to impose himself on the game"
>
> River Plate coach Ramon Diaz

He can trust his pace a bit too much at times and he is prone to giving away too many free-kicks, however, most of what he does is very impressive.

With Internazionale reported to be showing interest in the youngster, River have slapped a €12million price tag on him.

Tim Vickery

Leon GORETZKA

CLUB	Schalke
COUNTRY	Germany
POSITION	Midfielder
AGE	18 (06.02.95)
PREVIOUS CLUB	Bochum

Dubbed "the new Ballack" in certain German quarters, the teenage central midfielder is looking forward to continuing his education both on and off the pitch this season.

With just 12 months experience of second-tier football with Bochum under his belt, the rookie joined Ruhr rivals Schalke this summer after they activated a €2.75million release clause in his contract and he will now look to combine a Bundesliga debut with the demands of his school-leaving exams next year.

On the radar of a host of bigger clubs – notably Real Madrid, Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund – the youngster is as level-headed as he is unhurried.

"When such big clubs show an interest you have to be realistic," says Goretzka, who has been a key figure in German representative sides from under-16 to under-19 level. "I'm at a very early stage of my professional career, just a year in, and haven't played a single game in the Bundesliga.

"A transfer to Real Madrid was not really worth considering."

"I weighed up all my options and decided Schalke was the club for me. This is the right place for the next step in my career.

"The quality of training will be higher, Schalke are an important club who are always in contention in the Bundesliga and play in Europe, and with Bochum and Gelsenkirchen quite close I can continue at my present school."

An exciting mix of vision, astute decision-making, confidence and maturity, he will initially find himself behind midfield pivots Jermaine Jones and Roman Neustadter in the Schalke pecking order, but his time will undoubtedly come.

"I've never seen a boy of his age with so much ability and desire," says ex-Bochum director of sport Jens Todt. "He has a genuine shot at becoming one of the world's best."

Nick Bidwell

Learning curve...Goretzka feels his education will be best served at Schalke

Anthony MARTIAL

Moving on...Lyon had to sell academy graduate Martial to balance the books

CLUB	Monaco
COUNTRY	France
POSITION	Forward
AGE	17 (05.12.95)
PREVIOUS CLUB	Lyon

Monaco and their mega-rich Russian owner Dmitry Rybolovlev are not limiting themselves to shopping at the top end of the market this summer. In addition to buying Radamel Falcao, Joao Moutinho and James Rodriguez, they have also invested in exciting young French prospects such as Valenciennes centre-back Nicolas Isimat-Mirin and Lyon striker Martial, who cost €5million each.

After a string of eye-catching performances with French representative sides, from under-16 to under-19, and an impressive couple of starts for Lyon, Italian champions Juventus were among those circling before Monaco made their move.

"We're very happy Anthony has joined us," says Monaco technical director Riccardo Pecini. "He's one of the great hopes of his generation and we have to be thrilled he is going to continue his elite development here at Monaco."

Having only signed his first professional contract in August 2012, Martial is, of course, far from the finished article. But those in the know at the Stade de Gerland believed it was only a matter of time before he made the grade with Lyon. And in the eyes of many supporters the decision to let him go made no sense whatsoever.

In recent times, Lyon have placed much emphasis on manufacturing their own stars, so why sell off one of their academy crown jewels so soon?

The answer, naturally, is money. With the club not as robust financially as it once was, and needing to balance the 2012-13 books, the board saw no better solution to the shortfall than to offload its prized asset.

"With this transfer, we can keep all our other talented youngsters," argues Lyon president Jean-Michel Aulas. "You have to be lucid and make a choice."

Nick Bidwell

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Under-20 World Cup...Ghana midfielder Moses Odjer (left) and Dhurgham Ismail of Iraq in the third-place play-off

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Confederations Cup...Brazil captain Thiago Silva

FIFA rules...Cameroon (in green)

CAMEROON

Qualification in doubt

Cameroon went top of their World Cup qualifying group after FIFA overturned June's 2-0 loss to Togo, whose midfielder Alaixys Romao played in the game at the Stade de Kegue in Lome when he should have been serving a one-match ban.

However, Cameroon's football federation has since been suspended by FIFA following government interference, which means the country can not be represented in any regional, continental or international competitions, at club and international level, until the matter is resolved.

If that does not happen by September 6, FIFA will not allow Cameroon to play their final World Cup qualifier, against Libya, and they could be expelled from the competition.

ETHIOPIA

Victory overturned

Having seemingly booked their place in the two-legged third and final African qualifying round for next year's World Cup finals with a 2-1 victory over South Africa, Ethiopia must now beat Central African Republic in September to be certain of their spot after they were docked three points by FIFA.

Ethiopia have had to forfeit their 2-1 win away to Botswana in June after it was discovered that Minyahile Beyene was not eligible to play as he had been booked in two previous games.

FIFA awarded a 3-0 win to Botswana.

Internationals

CONFEDERATIONS CUP

In Brazil

Group A

June 15 - Brasilia
Brazil 3 (Neymar 3, Paulinho 48, Jo 90+3)
Japan 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 67,423. **Ref:** Proenca (Por)
Brazil: Julio Cesar - Daniel Alves, Thiago Silva, David Luiz, Marcelo, Luiz Gustavo, Paulinho, Oscar, Hulk (Hernanes 75), Neymar (Lucas Moura 74), Fred (Jo 81).
Japan: Kawashima - Uchida, Yoshida, Konno, Nagatomo, Hasebe, Endo (Hosogai 78), Kiyotake (Maeda 51), Honda (Inui 89), Kagawa, Okazaki.

June 16 - Rio de Janeiro
Mexico 1 (Hernandez pen 34)
Italy 2 (Pirlo 27, Balotelli 78)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 73,123. **Ref:** Osses (Chl)
Mexico: Corona - Flores, Rodriguez, Moreno, Salcido, Zavala (Jimenez 86), Torrado, Aquino (Mier 53), Dos Santos, Guardado, Hernandez.
Italy: Buffon - Abate, Barzagli, Chiellini, De Sciglio, De Rossi, Pirlo, Montolivo, Marchisio (Cerci 69), Giaccherini (Aquilani 88), Balotelli (Gilardino 86).

June 19 - Fortaleza
Brazil 2 (Neymar 9, Jo 90+3)
Mexico 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 57,804. **Ref:** Webb (Eng)
Brazil: Julio Cesar - Daniel Alves, Thiago Silva, David Luiz, Marcelo, Luiz Gustavo, Paulinho, Oscar (Hernanes 62), Hulk (Lucas Moura 78), Neymar, Fred (Jo 82).
Mexico: Corona - Flores (Herrera 58), Rodriguez, Moreno, Salcido, Torres Nilo (Barrera 70), Torrado (Jimenez 88), Mier, Dos Santos, Guardado, Hernandez.

June 19 - Recife
Italy 4 (De Rossi 41, Uchida og 50, Balotelli pen 52, Giovinco 86)
Japan 3 (Honda pen 21, Kagawa 33, Okazaki 69)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 40,489. **Ref:** Abal (Arg)
Italy: Buffon - Maggio (Abate 59), Barzagli, Chiellini, De Sciglio, De Rossi, Pirlo, Montolivo, Aquilani (Giovinco 30), Giaccherini (Marchisio 68), Balotelli.
Japan: Kawashima - Uchida (H Sakai 73), Yoshida, Konno, Nagatomo, Hasebe (Nakamura 90+2), Endo, Okazaki, Honda, Kagawa, Maeda (Havenaar 79).

June 22 - Salvador
Italy 2 (Giaccherini 51, Chiellini 71)
Brazil 4 (Dante 45+1, Neymar 55, Fred 66, 89)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 48,874. **Ref:** Irmatov (Uzb)
Italy: Buffon - Abate (Maggio 30), Bonucci, Chiellini, De Sciglio, Montolivo (Giaccherini 26), Aquilani, Candreva, Marchisio, Diamanti (El Shaarawy 72), Balotelli.
Brazil: Julio Cesar - Daniel Alves, Thiago Silva, David Luiz (Dante 34), Marcelo, Hernanes, Luiz Gustavo, Hulk (Fernando 76), Oscar, Neymar (Bernard 68), Fred.

June 22 - Belo Horizonte
Japan 1 (Okazaki 86)
Mexico 2 (Hernandez 54, 66)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 52,690. **Ref:** Brych (Ger)
Japan: Kawashima - Kurihara, Konno, Nagatomo (Nakamura 77), H Sakai (Uchida 59), Hosogai, Endo, Okazaki, Honda, Kagawa, Maeda (Yoshida 65).
Mexico: Ochoa - Mier, Reyes, Moreno, Torres Nilo, Torrado, Zavala, Dos Santos (Barrera 78), Guardado (Salcido 71), Jimenez (Aquino 90), Hernandez.

CONFEDERATIONS CUP – GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brazil (Q)	3	3	0	0	9	2	9
Italy (Q)	3	2	0	1	8	8	6
Mexico	3	1	0	2	3	5	3
Japan	3	0	0	3	4	9	0

Group B

June 16 - Recife
Spain 2 (Pedro 20, Soldado 32)
Uruguay 1 (Suarez 88)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 41,705. **Ref:** Nishimura (Jap)
Spain: Casillas - Arbeloa, Pique, Sergio Ramos, Jordi Alba, Busquets, Xavi (Javi Martinez 77), Iniesta, Fabregas (Cazorla 65), Pedro (Mata 81), Soldado.
Uruguay: Muslera - M Pereira, Lugano, Godin, Caceres, Gargano (Lodeiro 63), Perez (Forlan 69), Ramirez (Gonzalez 46), Rodriguez, Suarez, Cavani.

June 17 - Belo Horizonte
Tahiti 1 (J Tehau 54)
Nigeria 6 (Vallar og 5, Oduamadi 10, 26, 77, J Tehau og 69, Echiejile 80)
HT: 0-3. **Att:** 20,187. **Ref:** Aguilar (ESv)
Tahiti: Samin - Ludivion, Vallar (Faatiarau 54), J Tehau, Simon (Lemaire 78), Aitamai, Bourebare, Caroine, Vahirua (Atani 70), Chong Hue, A Tehau.
Nigeria: Enyeama - Ambrose, Oboabona, Omeruo (Egwuekwe 74), Echiejile, Ogude, Mikel, Mba (Ogu 56), Oduamadi, Ujah (Ideye 52), Musa.

June 20 - Rio de Janeiro
Spain 10 (Fernando Torres 5, 33, 57, 78, Silva 31, 89, Villa 39, 49, 64, Mata 66)
Tahiti 0
HT: 4-0. **Att:** 71,806. **Ref:** Haimoudi (Alg)
Spain: Reina - Azpilicueta, Albiol, Sergio Ramos (Jesus Navas 46), Monreal, Javi Martinez, Mata (Fabregas 70), Cazorla (Iniesta 76), Silva, Villa, Fernando Torres.
Tahiti: Roche - Ludivion, Vallar, J Tehau, Lemaire (Vero 74), Aitamai, Bourebare (L Tehau 69), Caroine, Vahirua, Chong Hue, A Tehau (T Tehau 53).

June 20 - Salvador
Nigeria 1 (Mikel 37)
Uruguay 2 (Lugano 19, Forlan 51)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 26,769. **Ref:** Kuipers (Hol)
Nigeria: Enyeama - Ambrose, Oboabona, Omeruo, Echiejile, Ogu (Mba 66), Mikel, Ogude, Oduamadi (Babatunde 45), Ideye (Akpala 74), Musa.
Uruguay: Muslera - Godin, Lugano, Caceres, M Pereira, Arevalo, Gonzalez, Rodriguez (A Pereira 88), Forlan, Suarez (Coates 83), Cavani.

June 23 - Fortaleza
Nigeria 0
Spain 3 (Jordi Alba 3, 88, Fernando Torres 62)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 51,263. **Ref:** Aguilar (ESv)
Nigeria: Enyeama - Ambrose, Oboabona, Omeruo (Egwuekwe 12), Echiejile, Ogude, Mikel, Mba (Ogu 64), Musa, Akpala (Gambo 71), Ideye.
Spain: Valdes - Arbeloa, Sergio Ramos, Pique, Jordi Alba, Busquets, Xavi, Iniesta, Pedro (Villa 75), Fabregas (Silva 54), Soldado (Fernando Torres 60).

June 23 - Recife
Uruguay 8 (Hernandez 2, 24, 45+1, pen 67, Perez 27, Lodeiro 61, Suarez 82, 90)
Tahiti 0
HT: 4-0. **Att:** 22,047. **Ref:** Proenca (Por)
Uruguay: Silva - Aguirregaray, Scotti, Coates, Perez, Eguren, Gargano, A Pereira, Lodeiro, Ramirez (Suarez 69), Hernandez.
Sent off: Scotti 52min.
Tahiti: Meriel - Vallar, J Tehau, Ludivion, Aitamai (Lemaire 53), Simon, Caroine, Vahirua, L Tehau (Atani 71), Chong Hue, Hnanyine (Tihoni 88).
Sent off: Ludivion 59min.

CONFEDERATIONS CUP – GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain (Q)	3	3	0	0	15	1	9
Uruguay (Q)	3	2	0	1	11	3	6
Nigeria	3	1	0	2	7	6	3
Tahiti	3	0	0	3	1	24	0

Top 2 in both groups qualified for semi-finals

Semi-finals

June 26 - Belo Horizonte
Brazil 2 (Fred 41, Paulinho 86)
Uruguay 1 (Cavani 48)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 57,483. **Ref:** Osses (Chl)
Brazil: Julio Cesar - Daniel Alves, Thiago Silva, David Luiz, Marcelo, Paulinho, Luiz Gustavo, Hulk (Bernard 64), Oscar (Hernanes 73), Neymar (Dante 90+2), Fred.
Uruguay: Muslera - Godin, Lugano, Caceres, M Pereira, Arevalo, Gonzalez (Gargano 83), Rodriguez, Forlan, Suarez, Cavani.

June 27 - Fortaleza
Spain 0
Italy 0
AeT. **Att:** 56,083. **Ref:** Webb (Eng)
Spain 7-6 on pens
Spain: Casillas - Arbeloa, Sergio Ramos, Pique, Jordi Alba, Busquets, Iniesta, Xavi, Pedro (Mata 79), Silva (Jesus Navas 53), Fernando Torres (Javi Martinez 94).
Italy: Buffon - Barzagli (Montolivo 46), Bonucci, Chiellini, Pirlo, De Rossi, Maggio, Giaccherini, Candreva, Marchisio (Aquilani 80), Gilardino (Giovinco 91).

3rd-place match

June 30 - Salvador
Uruguay 2 (Cavani 58, 78)
Italy 2 (Astori 24, Diamanti 73)
Aet. **HT:** 0-1. **90mins:** 2-2. **Att:** 43,382.
Ref: Haimoudi (Alg)
Italy 3-2 on pens
Uruguay: Muslera - M Pereira (A Pereira 81), Lugano, Godin, Caceres, Gargano, Arevalo (Perez 107), Rodriguez (Gonzalez 56), Forlan, Cavani, Suarez.
Italy: Buffon - Maggio, Astori (Bonucci 96), Chiellini, De Sciglio, Candreva, De Rossi (Aquilani 70), Montolivo, Diamanti (Giaccherini 83), El Shaarawy, Gilardino. *Sent off: Montolivo 110min.*

Final

June 30 - Rio de Janeiro
Brazil 3 (Fred 2, 47, Neymar 44)
Spain 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 73,531. **Ref:** Kuipers (Hol)
Brazil: Julio Cesar - Daniel Alves, Thiago Silva, David Luiz, Marcelo, Luiz Gustavo, Paulinho (Hernanes 88), Oscar, Hulk (Jadson 73), Neymar, Fred (Jo 80).
Spain: Casillas - Arbeloa (Azpilicueta 46), Pique, Sergio Ramos, Jordi Alba, Busquets, Xavi, Iniesta, Pedro, Mata (Jesus Navas 52), Fernando Torres (Villa 59). *Sent off: Pique 68min.*

Previous winners

1992[1]	Argentina
1995[1]	Denmark
1997	Brazil
1999	Mexico
2001	France
2003	France
2005	Brazil
2009	Brazil

[1]*Tournament known as the King Fahd Cup*

FRIENDLIES

Friday, July 5

July 5 - San Diego
United States 6 (Gomez 42, Donovan pen 56, 73, Wondolowski 71, Goodson 84, Bedoya 88)
Guatemala 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 25,080. **Ref:** Legister (Jam)
United States: Rimando - Parkhurst, Onyewu, Goodson, Beasley, Beckerman (Diskerud 46), Torres (Holden 46), Donovan (Bruin 73), Corona (Bedoya 59), Castillo (Shea 59), Gomez (Wondolowski 59).
Guatemala: Jerez - Castrillo, Vasquez, Hernandez (Cardona 59), Gallardo (Leal 78), J Lopez (Miranda 76), Trujillo (Perez 59), Marquez, Santeliz, M Lopez (Padilla 85), Contreras (Sequen 86).

2014 WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

REVISED TABLES
Africa section
2nd round

WC QUALS: AFRICA – 2ND ROUND: GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ethiopia[1]	5	3	1	1	6	5	10
South Africa	5	2	2	1	8	4	8
Botswana[1]	5	2	1	2	7	6	7
Cent Af Rep	5	1	0	4	4	10	3

[1]*Ethiopia's game away to Botswana in June, which they won 2-1, was awarded as a 3-0 win to the hosts because Ethiopia fielded an ineligible player*

Remaining games
Sep 6 Central African Republic v Ethiopia; South Africa v Botswana.

WC QUALS: AFRICA – 2ND ROUND: GROUP I

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cameroon[1]	5	3	1	1	7	3	10
Libya	5	2	3	0	5	2	9
DR Congo	5	1	3	1	2	1	6
Togo[1]	5	0	1	4	2	10	1

[1]*Togo's game at home to Cameroon in June, which they won 2-0, was awarded as a 3-0 win to Cameroon because Togo fielded an ineligible player*

Remaining games
Sep 6 Cameroon v Libya; Togo v DR Congo.

IRAQ

Ban back in place

The ban on Iraq hosting friendlies – which was lifted in March – was re-imposed after an increase in violence in the country.

TUNISIA

Holders already out

Tunisia, the domestic African Nations Championship holders, will not be able to defend their title next year after they were eliminated in the first qualifying round of the competition by Morocco. Tunisia were beaten 1-0 on aggregate after they lost the first leg of the tie at home.

The finals of the 2014 tournament – which is for the continent's home-based players – will be held in South Africa.

URUGUAY

Suarez's record

Luis Suarez's three goals for Uruguay in the Confederations Cup took him on to a new national record of 35 in total – one more than the 34 of Diego Forlan, who scored twice during the competition.

Forlan won his 100th cap, and scored the winner, in the 2-1 victory over Nigeria.

Double...Donovan struck twice

USA

Donovan half century

Landon Donovan became the first player to score 50 times for the US with the first of his two goals in a 6-0 defeat of Guatemala.

The 31-year-old was making his return to international football ahead of the CONCACAF Gold Cup following a short break from the game.

● The 10 group winners qualify for the 3rd round, where they will be paired in 5 2-leg ties (to be played between Oct 11 & Nov 19), the winners of which will qualify for the finals

FIXTURES (August)

Europe section

Group F

Aug 14: Northern Ireland v Russia (Belfast).

WC QUALS: EUROPE – GROUP F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Portugal	7	4	2	1	12	6	14
Russia	5	4	0	1	8	1	12
Israel	6	3	2	1	15	8	11
Azerbaijan	7	0	4	3	3	9	4
N Ireland	5	0	3	2	3	7	3
Luxembourg	6	0	3	3	3	13	3

2015 ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS

Group A

ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS – GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Jordan	1	1	0	0	4	0	3
Oman	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Syria	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Singapore	1	0	0	1	0	4	0

Next fixtures

Aug 14: Singapore v Oman.
Aug 15: Syria v Jordan.

Group B

ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS – GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iran	2	1	1	0	6	1	4
Kuwait	2	1	1	0	4	2	4
Lebanon	2	1	0	1	5	7	3
Thailand	2	0	0	2	3	8	0

Next fixtures

Oct 15: Iran v Thailand; Lebanon v Kuwait.

Group C

ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS – GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Saudi Arabia	2	2	0	0	4	2	6
China	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Iraq	2	1	0	1	1	1	3
Indonesia	2	0	0	2	1	3	0

Next fixtures

Oct 15: Indonesia v China; Iraq v Saudi Arabia.

Group D

ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS – GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bahrain	2	2	0	0	3	0	6
Qatar	2	1	0	1	2	1	3
Malaysia	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
Yemen	2	0	0	2	1	4	0

Next fixtures

Oct 15: Malaysia v Bahrain; Qatar v Yemen.

Group E

ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS – GROUP E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
UAE	2	2	0	0	4	2	6
Hong Kong	2	1	1	0	1	0	4
Uzbekistan	2	0	1	1	1	2	1
Vietnam	2	0	0	2	1	3	0

Next fixtures

Oct 15: UAE v Hong Kong; Vietnam v Uzbekistan.

Each team plays 6 times

Top 2 in each group and the 3rd-placed team with the best record qualify for finals, to which host Australia, Japan, North Korea, South Korea and the 2014 AFC Challenge Cup winner qualify automatically

FRIENDLY FIXTURES

Wednesday, August 14

Albania v Armenia (Tirana)
Algeria v Guinea (Blida)
Austria v Greece (Salzburg)
Azerbaijan v Malta (Baku)
Belarus v Montenegro (Minsk)
Belgium v France (Brussels)
Bosnia-Herzegovina v United States (Sarajevo)
Chile v Iraq (Copenhagen, Denmark)
Ecuador v Spain (Guayaquil)
England v Scotland (London)
Estonia v Latvia (Tallinn)
Finland v Slovenia (Turku)
Germany v Paraguay (Kaiserslautern)
Hungary v Czech Republic
Iceland v Faroe Islands (Reykjavik)
Italy v Argentina (Rome)
Japan v Uruguay (Rifu)
Kazakhstan v Georgia (Astana)
Liechtenstein v Croatia (Vaduz)
Luxembourg v Lithuania (Luxembourg)
Macedonia v Bulgaria (Skopje)
Mexico v Ivory Coast (New York)
Moldova v Andorra (Chisinau)
Panama v Venezuela (Panama City)
Poland v Denmark (Gdansk)
Portugal v Holland (Faro)
Qatar v Sudan (Doha)
Romania v Slovakia (Bucharest)
South Korea v Peru (Seoul)
Sweden v Norway (Stockholm)
Switzerland v Brazil (Basle)
Taiwan v Malaysia
Tajikistan v India
Ukraine v Israel (Kiev)
Uzbekistan v Turkey
Wales v Republic of Ireland (Cardiff)

UNDER-20 WORLD CUP

In Turkey

Group A

June 21: France 3 Ghana 1; United States 1 Spain 4.
June 24: France 1 United States 1; Spain 1 Ghana 0.
June 27: Spain 2 France 1; Ghana 4 United States 1.

UNDER-20 WORLD CUP – GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain (Q)	3	3	0	0	7	2	9
France (Q)	3	1	1	1	5	4	4
Ghana (Q)	3	1	0	2	5	5	3
United States	3	0	1	2	3	9	1

Group B

June 21: Cuba 1 South Korea 2; Nigeria 2 Portugal 3.
June 24: Cuba 0 Nigeria 3; Portugal 2 South Korea 2.
June 27: South Korea 0 Nigeria 1; Portugal 5 Cuba 0.

UNDER-20 WORLD CUP – GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Portugal (Q)	3	2	1	0	10	4	7
Nigeria (Q)	3	2	0	1	6	3	6
Sth Korea (Q)	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Cuba	3	0	0	3	1	10	0

Group C

June 22: Colombia 1 Australia 1; Turkey 3 El Salvador 0.
June 25: Australia 1 El Salvador 2; Turkey 0 Colombia 1.
June 28: Australia 1 Turkey 2; El Salvador 0 Colombia 3.

UNDER-20 WORLD CUP – GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Colombia (Q)	3	2	1	0	5	1	7
Turkey (Q)	3	2	0	1	5	2	6
El Salvador	3	1	0	2	2	7	3
Australia	3	0	1	2	3	5	1

Group D

June 22: Mexico 1 Greece 2; Paraguay 1 Mali 1.
June 25: Mexico 0 Paraguay 1; Mali 0 Greece 0.
June 28: Greece 1 Paraguay 1; Mali 1 Mexico 4.

UNDER-20 WORLD CUP – GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Greece (Q)	3	1	2	0	3	2	5
Paraguay (Q)	3	1	2	0	3	2	5
Mexico (Q)	3	1	0	2	5	4	3
Mali	3	0	2	1	2	5	2

Group E

June 23: Chile 2 Egypt 1; England 2 Iraq 2.
June 26: Chile 1 England 1; Iraq 2 Egypt 1.
June 29: Iraq 2 Chile 1; Egypt 2 England 0.

UNDER-20 WORLD CUP – GROUP E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iraq (Q)	3	2	1	0	6	4	7
Chile (Q)	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Egypt	3	1	0	2	4	4	3
England	3	0	2	1	3	5	2

Group F

June 23: New Zealand 0 Uzbekistan 3; Uruguay 0 Croatia 1.
June 26: New Zealand 0 Uruguay 2; Croatia 1 Uzbekistan 1.
June 29: Uzbekistan 0 Uruguay 4; Croatia 2 New Zealand 1.

UNDER-20 WORLD CUP – GROUP F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Croatia (Q)	3	2	1	0	4	2	7
Uruguay (Q)	3	2	0	1	6	1	6
Uzbekistan (Q)	3	1	1	1	4	5	4
New Zealand	3	0	0	3	1	7	0

Top 2 in each group and the 4 3rd-placed teams with the best record qualified for 1st knockout round

1st knockout round

July 2: Spain 2 Mexico 1; Greece 1 Uzbekistan 3; Nigeria 1 Uruguay 2; France 4 Turkey 1.
July 3: Portugal 2 Ghana 3; Croatia 0 Chile 2; Colombia 1 South Korea 1 (aet, South Korea 8-7 on pens); Iraq 1 Paraguay 0.

Quarter-finals

July 6: France 4 Uzbekistan 0; Uruguay 1 Spain 0 (aet).
July 7: Iraq 3 South Korea 3 (aet, Iraq 5-4 on pens); Ghana 4 Chile 3 (aet).

Semi-finals

July 10 - Bursa
France 2 (Thauvin 43, 74)
Ghana 1 (Assifuah 47)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 6,314. **Ref:** Shukralla (Bhn)
Sent off: Umtiti (France) 80min

July 10 - Trabzon
Iraq 1 (Adnan 34)
Uruguay 1 (Bueno 87)
Aet. **HT:** 1-0. **90mins:** 1-1. **Att:** 3,188.
Ref: Eriksson (Swe)
Uruguay 7-6 on pens

3rd-place match

July 13 - Istanbul
Ghana 3 (Attamah 35, Assifuah 45+1, Acheampong 78)
Iraq 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 20,601. **Ref:** Ricci (Bra)
Ghana: R Ofori - Attamah, Baba, Acheampong, Salifu, Aboagye, Lartey, Ashia (Narh 82), Assifuah, Odjer (Anaba 64), Addico (Nketiah 46).
Iraq: Hameed - Adnan, Faez, Salman, J Kadhim (Shwkan 79), Abdulraheem, Kamil (Shakor 55), Tareq, Nadhim, D Ismael, Abdulhussein (I Kadhim 69).

Final

July 13 - Istanbul
France 0
Uruguay 0
Aet. **Att:** 20,601. **Ref:** Garcia (Mex)
France 4-1 on pens
France: Areola - Foulquier, Zouma, Pogba, Kondogbia, Sanogo, Bahebeck (Bosetti 65; Ngando 112), Digne (Polomat 115), Sarr, Veretout, Thauvin.
Uruguay: De Amores - Velazquez, Silva, Pais, Cristoforo, Lopez, Laxalt (De Arrascaeta 71), Acevedo, Rodriguez (Olaza 100), Gimenez (G Varela 84), Avenatti.

Previous winners[1]

1977	Soviet Union
1979	Argentina
1981	West Germany
1983	Brazil
1985	Brazil
1987	Yugoslavia
1989	Portugal
1991	Portugal
1993	Brazil
1995	Argentina
1997	Argentina
1999	Spain
2001	Argentina
2003	Brazil
2005	Argentina
2007	Argentina
2009	Ghana
2011	Brazil

[1]*Tournament called World Youth Championship until 2005*

KEY TO TABLES
(Q) = qualified for next stage

CONFEDERATIONS CUP
Brazil rise to the challenge

Victorious...player of the tournament Neymar lifts the trophy as he leads Brazil's celebrations after their 3-0 win over Spain in the Confederations Cup Final

Never has the Confederations Cup enjoyed so much worldwide publicity and visibility, thanks to Brazil's street "manifestations".

And never, with happy coincidence, has the Confederations Cup thrown up such fine football. As one fan said: "This was almost like what you expect from the closing stages of a World Cup."

With eight teams, the tournament showed exactly what football has lost through the commercially driven trend to gigantism. The 32-team World Cup and the next 24-team European Championship are the lowest common denominator and not the glitter of the elite.

The ninth Confederations Cup took light from the very first minutes as Brazil and player of the tournament Neymar launched the party with a perfect start in Group A.

The hosts saw their star man score after only three minutes against Japan to convert the earlier jeers for presidents Dilma Rousseff of Brazil and Sepp Blatter of FIFA into cheers.

Ultimately, Brasilia's prospective white elephant Estadio Nacional witnessed Luiz Felipe Scolari's men drive on to a 3-0 win with second-half goals from Tottenham Hotspur-bound midfielder Paulinho and substitute striker Jo.

Japan were disappointed with themselves. They came into the tournament having just secured World Cup qualification and appeared still under the influence of the celebratory hangover.

A crowd of 67,423 were at that match, and a further 73,123 turned out the following afternoon to watch Andrea Pirlo and Mario Balotelli see off Mexico in the first competitive game since the Maracana's reopening. Pirlo's goal from a free-kick was the perfect way for him to celebrate his 100th international appearance.

The second round of matches effectively sealed the group. Neymar and Jo again scored early and late to eliminate Mexico, while Italy outscored Japan 4-3 in the

Quick start...Fred wheels away in triumph after putting Brazil ahead in the Final

"We are still not a team that is complete, we know that we have a good group but we still have to prove a lot. But today, we embarked on the path to 2014"

Brazil boss Luiz Felipe Scolari after the Final

most exciting and entertaining match of the tournament, in the most corner-cut of stadia in Recife.

Japan duly finished bottom of the group after losing their last game 2-1 to Mexico, for whom Manchester United's Javier Hernandez struck his 34th and 35th goals for his country, placing him third in the all-time rankings for *El Tri*.

Brazil, meanwhile, topped the group after a rigorous test from Italy in a game both teams sought to win with enormous determination so as to avoid having to play Spain in the semi-finals.

Neymar scored for a third successive game, but the spotlight was claimed by Fluminense's Fred, who scored twice in an international for the first time in his eight-year Brazil career.

Unique place

Group B was more straightforward, largely through the presence of the students, teachers and coconut harvesters of Tahiti who made the most of their unique place in the international sun.

The islanders suffered the heaviest defeat in Confederations Cup history when they crashed 10-0 to Spain on their way to conceding a tournament-record 24 goals.

Jonathan Tehau scored against Nigeria to claim their lone consolation. However, coach Eddy Taeta and his men were not fazed by their massive defeats and were a delightful reminder that world football competition is not only about the superstars and champion nations.

Tahiti represented Oceania

Joy...Tehau (centre) hails Tahiti's only goal

Heads up...Paulinho (no18) guides home Brazil's second goal against Uruguay

better than the Nigerians did Africa. The not-so-Super Eagles arrived on the eve of the finals after being delayed by the usual, tedious row over money – which is a feature of so many African nations heading for the big dates.

The group's decisive match was the first in which Spain defeated Uruguay 2-1. After that it was a comparatively predictable procession with the world and European champions topping the group and the South Americans finishing as runners-up.

The schedule offered Brazil a decisive advantage, taking on their historic old rivals from Uruguay in Belo Horizonte a full day before the second semi-final.

This duel, always played out in the dark shadow of Brazil's "*Maracanazo*" memory of 1950, shouldered further concern: Belo Horizonte mayor Marcio Lacerda had declared the day a local holiday so that businesses could lock down their premises and the military police could better co-ordinate their resistance to the pre-game protest marches.

Indeed, a tinge of tear gas was wafting into the Mineirao as Brazil battled their way to a 2-1 win, which coach Scolari later identified as the performance which pleased him the least.

Uruguay had their chances. Skipper Diego Forlan missed an early penalty, bravely awarded by Chilean referee Enrique Osses, before defensive lapses handed goals to Fred – back in his home city – and Paulinho. Edinson Cavani's reply, after Brazilian defensive confusion, was not enough. Uruguay manager Oscar Tabarez did not contest the outcome but cautioned that he had yet to see evidence this was a truly "rekindled" Brazil.

The hosts were delighted again the next day as Spain were forced to battle all the way through to the end of a tiring goalless draw after extra time before defeating Italy on penalties. Italy were possibly denied a winning hand by the muscle strain which had already sent Balotelli home.

> "The experience made us aware of the huge expectations and contrasts that exist when it comes to top international football"
> Tahiti coach Eddy Etaeta

Thoroughly trounced

In the Final, there would only ever be one outcome in a rocking, trembling, quivering Maracana after Fred struck almost immediately, and Spain were thoroughly trounced.

Not that Scolari was deceived. Even in the thrill of the 3-0 victory, he pointed out that the decisive moment was a remarkable goal-line clearance by David Luiz from Pedro when Brazil were still just one goal ahead.

Minutes later Neymar scored Brazil's second goal. In the second half, Fred scored another and Spain's implosion was completed by a penalty miss from Sergio Ramos and a late red card for Gerard Pique.

And so Spain coach Vicente Del Bosque saw his team's unbeaten three-year competitive run come to an end. Their minor consolations were in taking home the fair play prize and top scorer award. Fernando Torres and Fred both managed to score five goals but Torres played in fewer games: appearing in four, compared with Fred's five.

Collision course...Japan's Maya Yoshida (no22) tussles with Balotelli of Italy

Keir Radnedge

• *For full results see page 92; squads page 113*

UNDER-20 WORLD CUP
France are victorious

Hero...France goalkeeper Areola saves De Arrascaeta's spot-kick in the penalty shoot-out against Uruguay in the Final

France won the Under-20 World Cup for the first time – with a victory over Uruguay on penalties after a goalless 120 minutes in the Final in Istanbul – and in doing so became the first European winners of the title since Spain in 1999.

There were some notable absentees from the finals – such as Argentina, Brazil, Germany, Holland and Italy – but coach Pierre Mankowski's France proved themselves the most accomplished side, typified by captain and midfielder Paul Pogba, who won the Golden Ball as player of the tournament. The silver ball went to Nicolas Lopez of Uruguay, while the bronze award was won by Ghana's Clifford Aboagye.

"I have to take my hat off to my players, France is a collective," said Mankowski. "Paul [Pogba] is important, but it is the group of 21 that won us this title. Solidarity is the biggest quality of this team."

Spain had been the pre-tournament favourites but they fell to Uruguay in the quarter-finals. The South Americans also put paid to Iraq, the surprise of the competition, in the semi-finals.

Of the big disappointments, England again failed to win a match at this level, while the USA finished bottom of their group.

France goalkeeper Alphonse Areola was the hero of the Final in Istanbul's Ali Sami Yen Arena, saving two of Uruguay's spot-kicks, from Emiliano Velazquez and Giorgian De Arrascaeta, in the shoot-out.

GROUP STAGE

France had started in confident manner, beating Ghana 3-1 in the opening game of Group A thanks to second-half goals from Geoffrey Kondogbia, Yaya Sanogo and Jean-Christophe Bahebeck, with Richmond Boakye claiming a late consolation for Ghana, the 2009 champions.

But France were held in their second match, against the USA. They had looked to be heading for victory after new Arsenal signing Sanogo scored from the penalty spot, while the Americans had a spot-kick saved by Areola. But five minutes from time, American sub Daniel Cuevas struck from close range to equalise.

The USA had lost their opening game to one of the tournament favourites Spain, who shared the goals between Barcelona's Gerard Deulofeu and Jese of Real Madrid in a 4-1 victory.

Spain overcame Ghana 1-0 in their second game with a goal from Jese, who was on target again in their final group game, scoring one goal and setting up Paco Alcacer as Spain beat France 2-1 to top the group.

France finished in second place while Ghana won their final game against the USA to claim a lifeline and squeeze into the knockout phase as one of the best third-placed teams. Liberty Professionals forward Ebenezer Assifuah scored two of Ghana's goals in an emphatic 4-1 victory over the USA.

Portugal topped Group B, ahead of Nigeria and South Korea. They beat Nigeria 3-2 in an exciting opening game, with Sporting Lisbon winger Bruma scoring twice to kill off a revival led by Nigeria captain Abdul Ajagun, who scored both his side's goals.

Bruma also turned out to be Portugal's biggest threat in their second game, against South Korea. He made the scoresheet again, along with strike partner Aladje, but Korea twice equalised to force a 2-2 draw.

Bruma then grabbed two more goals in Portugal's final group game, a 5-0 drubbing of Cuba. The Caribbean debutants lost all three of their games, although they did take the lead in their opening game against South Korea before going down 2-1.

South Korea lost their final group game, 1-0 to Nigeria, but still qualified for the knockout stages as one of the best third-placed teams. Olarenwaju Kayode, scorer of three goals in Colombia in 2011, scored the only goal of the game for Nigeria.

Colombia, the South American Under-20 champions, were much fancied to progress from Group C, but in their opening match they were stunned by a goal from Australian midfielder Daniel De Silva, who at the age of 16 years

Impressive...Bruma (sat on floor) scores Portugal's fourth goal against Cuba

and three months was the youngest player in this year's tournament and the third-youngest ever to score in the finals.

The Colombians recovered to equalise through Jhon Cordoba and then beat hosts Turkey 1-0 and El Salvador 3-0 to top the group. Juan Quintero demonstrated why he had been picked out by many as a potential star by scoring a superb individual goal against Turkey and also making his mark against El

Youngster...De Silva (right)

Salvador. The Turks, having opened with a 3-0 win over El Salvador, qualified for the knockout stage with a hard-fought 2-1 win over Australia. The Young Socceroos, who lost their second game to El Salvador, went out.

Greece stunned Mexico in their opening Group D game. Under-17 world champions in 2011, Mexico had been fancied to win the group and dominated most of the opening match only to concede a late winner. They went behind to a goal from Andreas Bouchlakis, before Jorge Espericueta levelled the game with a terrific free-kick. But with two minutes remaining, Dimitrios Kolovos turned on the edge of the area and beat Richard Sanchez to claim an unlikely victory.

Mexico also lost their second game, 1-0 to Paraguay. Derlis Gonzalez scored the decisive goal but Espericueta hit the bar in the final minute.

Paraguay and Greece both drew with Mali, meaning that their meeting in the final group game would decide the outcome of the group. Paraguay suffered a setback on 24 minutes with the sending-off of captain Gustavo Gomez. Greece finally took advantage of the numerical superiority through a Dimitrios Diamantakos header with 22 minutes remaining. But Paraguay grabbed an unlikely equaliser through substitute Brian Montenegro, who scored with an acrobatic overhead kick.

The 1-1 result left the two teams level on the same points, with the same goals scored and conceded. Lots were drawn and were won by Greece, who stayed in Gaziantep to play one of the best third-placed teams.

Mexico were in danger of missing out on the knockout stage but a 4-1 victory over Mali in their final group game allowed them to sneak into the knockout stages as one of the best third-placed teams.

Iraq had gone into the tournament as an unknown quantity, having last competed in the Under-20 finals in 2001. But they proved to be the tournament's surprise package, winning Group E on their way to

Winner...Kolovos (no10)

the semi-finals.

One of Iraq's outstanding players, full-back Ali Adnan, set the tone for their surprise run by scoring a dramatic 93rd-minute equaliser against England in their opening match. England had looked comfortable after going 2-0 up but Iraq pulled a goal back with 15 minutes remaining after goalkeeper Sam Johnstone fouled Mohannad Abdul Raheem and Ali Faez fired home the penalty. Then in injury time Adnan twisted his way through the English defence to claim an unlikely equaliser.

In their second game, Iraq came from behind to beat Egypt 2-1, with the winner scored by the exceptional Abdul Raheem.

In their final group game, the Iraqis took advantage of Chile's decision to rest key players. Abdul Raheem was again at the heart of the action, pulling the strings in a 2-1 win that confirmed Iraq as group winners.

Chile took second place in the group thanks to their opening-match victory over Egypt and a 1-1 draw with England in their second game.

England were perhaps unfortunate to draw with Chile, after Everton's Ross Barkley and Tottenham Hotspur's Harry Kane combined for the equaliser, but they failed to turn their greater possession into a winning goal.

The draw left England needing to beat Egypt in their final group game. But again they failed to take their chances while Egypt took theirs, through Trezeguet and Ahmed Hassan, although the 2-0 result left both teams heading home.

"I thought it was probably our worst performance since we've been here, even though we created a lot of chances," said England manager Peter Taylor.

"If you don't play as well as you can and you don't take chances, you get punished and that's what happened"

England thus followed their compatriots at the Under-21 European Championship by failing to win a single match and finishing bottom of the group.

Uruguay lost their opening Group G match 1-0 to Croatia, who missed a penalty through Marko Livaja but then scored the decisive goal just before half-time through Ante Rebic.

The Uruguayans then beat New Zealand 2-0 and Uzbekistan 4-0 to claim their place in the knockout stages. Nicolas Lopez, a substitute against Croatia, was a key figure in both subsequent games, both as a creator and goalscorer.

However, Croatia topped the group after beating New Zealand in their final group game, despite fielding a weakened side.

Uzbekistan made it into the knockout stages as one of the best third-placed teams after Pakhtakor midfielder Abbosbek Makhstaliev inspired them to a 3-0 win over New Zealand in their opening game. They then claimed a point against Croatia.

ROUND OF 16

Hosts Turkey bowed out of the competition after being outplayed by France. The 4-1 victory could have been more impressive but Florian Thauvin blasted his 65th-minute penalty over the bar.

Uzbekistan got the better of Greece in a match that turned just after the hour mark, when Dimitrios Kourbelis conceded the second of the game's three penalties and was sent off, handing Uzbekistan a crucial advantage.

Igor Sergeev converted the spot-kick and Greece then conceded a second spot-kick late in the game to give the Uzbeks a 3-1 victory.

Portugal and Ghana played out the most entertaining game of the round. Portugal had emerged as one of the tournament favourites after their form in the group stages but conceded the opening goal in the 19th minute to a stunning 30-yard strike from Kennedy Ashia. Ghana led 1-0 until the 71st minute, when four goals were

Dejected...Turkey go out

UNDER-20 WORLD CUP

scored in 15 minutes - including a dramatic late winner from Boakye's fiercely struck free-kick.

Chile scored two late goals to send Croatia home from the competition. A closely-fought contest was settled by Nicolas Castillo's 81st-minute improvised backwards header over the stranded keeper Oliver Zelenika. Jozo Simunovic turned Christian Bravo's cross into his own net four minutes later to confirm Croatia's departure.

The Iraqi fairy tale continued with a 1-0 victory over Paraguay setting up a quarter-final against South Korea.

A close contest saw both goalkeepers in outstanding form and the match went into extra time, when Adnan' deep cross caught Paraguay captain Junior Alonso out of position. Substitute Farhan Shakor stole in to send a header spinning into the net off the inside of the left-hand post.

South Korea kept their nerve in a penalty shoot-out after Colombia's Juan Quintero had equalised with a brilliant last-gasp free-kick to set up the shoot-out decider.

Colombian Deivy Balanta was the unfortunate player who missed his penalty, allowing the Asian Under-20 champions to win the shoot-out 8-7.

Lopez was again Uruguay's hero, scoring twice in their 2-1 victory over Nigeria, who had Abdullahi Shehu sent off just before half-time, although Kayode briefly pulled Nigeria level.

Favourites Spain progressed to the quarter-finals after beating Mexico 2-1, but they were made to work hard for their victory.

Arturo Gonzalez gave the Mexicans an early lead, which they then set out to defend. Spain needed late goals from the Real Madrid pair of Derik and Jese to triumph.

QUARTER-FINALS

France brushed aside Uzbekistan in a one-sided encounter thanks to goals from Sanogo, Pogba, Thauvin and Kurt Zouma. Uzbekistan, who had Tohirjon Shamshitdinov sent off midway through the second half, never looked like challenging the French, who were 3-0 up by half-time.

Ghana sealed a place in the semi-finals with a dramatic 121st-minute winner from Assifuah to secure a thrilling 4-3 win over Chile.

A topsy-turvy match saw Ghana take the lead through 16-year-old Moses Odjer, only for Castillo to continue his impressive scoring streak with the equaliser. Manchester United forward Angelo Henriquez put Chile in front midway through the first half, but Assifuah snatched

Success...Iraq beat South Korea

a 72nd-minute equaliser to send the game into extra time. Henriquez again put Chile ahead only for Seidu Salifu to equalise. A minute into stoppage time at the end of the 120 minutes, Assifuah took advantage of a defensive mix-up to head a sensational winner that sent Ghana into the semi-finals.

Iraq were involved in another exciting match in their quarter-final. The Iraqis saw off South Korea 5-4 on penalties after a 3-3 draw in Kayseri. Shakor had struck his second goal of the game in the 118th minute to seemingly put Iraq through, but with 15 seconds remaining Jung Hyun-cheol equalised for the Koreans.

It was the second penalty shoot-out between the two teams in the past year. At the Asian Under-19 Championship, Iraq had triumphed, with Shakor scoring the crucial spot-kick, and he was the hero again, firing home the winner from the spot as the remarkable Iraq story continued.

"We built this team like a family" said a proud Iraq coach, Hakeem Shakir, in response to rumours that his success was down to overage players.

Uruguay pulled off a huge upset, beating tournament favourites Spain by a single goal in extra time. Both teams had chances to win the game in normal time, but it took a powerful header by substitute Felipe Avenatti from De Arrascaeta's corner to settle the game in the 103rd minute.

SEMI-FINALS

Lille midfielder Thauvin inspired France to a battling win over Ghana. He scored in both halves for France while Assifuah scored his fifth goal of the tournament just after half-time for Ghana, who finished with 10 men after Samuel Umtiti was sent off.

Thauvin's winning goal came in the 74th minute. Picking the ball up on the right, he cut inside and fired a left-foot shot into the bottom corner. Assifuah had chances to equalise but French keeper Areola was up to the task.

In the other semi, Uruguay finally ended Iraq's spectacular run, although they needed penalties to reach the Final.

Indeed, Iraq were on course to make the Final themselves after Adnan opened the scoring with a stunning free-kick from a seemingly impossible angle. Iraq looked capable of scoring a second, with Adnan again threatening from a set-piece before Gonzalo Bueno volleyed home a dramatic late equaliser.

With no further goals, the match went to penalties. Saif Salman's missed spot-kick sent Uruguay into the Final – and Iraq home after a memorable campaign.

John Holmesdale

Joy...Uruguay's Gianni Rodriguez (left)

SIDELINES

Top scorer...Assifuah

● Ghana's Ebenezer Assifuah finished as the tournament's top scorer after scoring his sixth goal in his country's 3-0 win over Iraq in the third-place play-off match.

● France became the first country to win all five FIFA tournaments: World Cup, Confederations Cup, Under-17s, Under 20s and the Olympics.

● FIFA said it had looked into but dismissed claims that Iraq's players were overage after it had received anonymous emails. Many of the Iraq team have been permanent fixtures in the Iraqi league from the 2009-10 season, making them 15 or 16 when they made their league debuts.

● Attendance figures in Turkey were poor, with official statistics giving the aggregate attendance for the tournament at 293,795, an average of 5,649. That was down from an average of more than 25,000 per game in Colombia two years ago. However, even the average figure for 2013 is likely to be misleading as most of the games - 42 out of 52 - were played as double-headers.

● There was a strong African feel to the France side. Kurt Zouma and Geoffrey Kondogbia could play for the Central African Republic; Samuel Umtiti, Jean-Christophe Bahebeck and Axel Ngando are of Cameroonian origin, while Yaya Sanogo could represent Mali or Ivory Coast.

THE SQUADS UNDER-20 WORLD CUP

AUSTRALIA

Goalkeepers
Anthony Bouzanis (Sydney), Jack Duncan (Newcastle Jets), Paul Izzo (Adelaide United)

Defenders
Reece Caira (Western Sydney Wanderers), Connor Chapman (Newcastle Jets), James Donachie (Brisbane Roar), Scott Galloway (Melbourne Victory), Jason Geria (Melbourne Victory), Curtis Good (Newcastle United, Eng), Andrew Hoole (Newcastle Jets), David Vrankovic (Melbourne Heart)

Midfielders
Joshua Brillante (Newcastle Jets), Daniel De Silva (Perth Glory), Ryan Edwards (Reading, Eng), Hagi Gligor (Sydney), Jackson Irvine (Celtic, Sco), Ryan Williams (Fulham, Eng)

Forwards
Corey Gameiro (Wellington Phoenix), Jamie Maclaren (Blackburn Rovers, Eng), Connor Pain (Melbourne Victory), Adam Taggart (Newcastle Jets)

Coach
Paul Okon

CHILE

Goalkeepers
Brayan Cortes (Deportes Iquique), Dario Melo (Palestino), Alvaro Salazar (Colo-Colo)

Defenders
Felipe Campos (Palestino), Alejandro Contreras (Palestino), Valber Huerta (Universidad de Chile), Mario Larenas (Union Espanola), Igor Lichnovsky (Universidad de Chile), Andres Robles (Santiago Wanderers)

Midfielders
Claudio Baeza (Colo-Colo), Christian Bravo (Konavljanin, Cro), Cristian Cuevas (Chelsea, Eng), Cesar Fuentes (O'Higgins), Oscar Hernandez (Union Espanola), Sebastian Martinez (Universidad de Chile), Nicolas Maturana (Universidad de Chile), Bryan Rabello (Sevilla, Spa), Diego Valdes (Audax Italiano)

Forwards
Nicolas Castillo (Universidad Catolica), Angelo Henriquez (Manchester United, Eng), Felipe Mora (Audax Italiano)

Coach
Mario Salas

COLOMBIA

Goalkeepers
Cristian Bonilla (Atletico Nacional), Luis Hurtado (Deportivo Cali), Jair Mosquera (Barranquilla)

Defenders
Deivy Balanta (Alianza Petrolera), Andres Correa (Independiente Medellin), Yair Ibarguen (Olimpia, Par), Felipe Aguilar Mendoza (Alianza Petrolera), Helibelton Palacios (Deportivo Cali), Jherson Vergara (Universitario Popayan)

Midfielders
Jaine Barreiro (Deportes Quindio), Luis Hernando Mena (Boyaca Chico), Jose Leudo (Estudiantes, Arg), Pedro Leon Osorio (Atletico Nacional), Cristian Palomeque (Alianza Petrolera), Sebastian Perez (Atletico Nacional), Juan Quintero (Pescara, Ita)

Forwards
Miguel Borja (Cortulua), Jhon Cordoba (Jaguares, Mex), Harrison Mojica (Deportivo Cali), Brayan Perea (Deportivo Cali), Andres Renteria (Santos Laguna, Mex)

Coach
Carlos Alberto Restrepo

CROATIA

Goalkeepers
Dominik Livakovic (NK Zagreb), Simon Sluga (Verona, Ita), Oliver Zelenika (Rudes)

Defenders
Ivan Aleksic (Osijek), Josip Calusic (Dinamo Zagreb), Toni Gorupec (Radnik Sesvete), Niko Datkovic (Rijeka), Mato Milos (Cibalia), Jozo Simunovic (Dinamo Zagreb)

Midfielders
Petar Brlek (Slaven Belupo), Dario Canadija (Slaven Belupo), Miro Kovacic (Hajduk Split), Hrvoje Milicevic (Zrinjski Mostar, Bos), Danijel Miskic (Dinamo Zagreb), Filip Mrzljak (Lokomotiva), Marko Pajac (Radnik Sesvete), Marko Pjaca (Lokomotiva)

Forwards
Kruno Ivancic (Radnik Sesvete), Marko Livaja (Atalanta, Ita), Stipe Perica (Zadar), Ante Rebic (RNK Split)

Coach
Dinko Jelicic

CUBA

Goalkeepers
Delvis Lumpuy (Villa Clara), Elier Pozo (Pinar del Rio), Sandy Sanchez (Las Tunas)

Defenders
Emmanuel Labrada (Granma), Abel Martinez (Havana), Lazaro Mezquia (Artemisa), Yosel Piedra (Villa Clara), Brian Rosales (Matanzas), Andy Vaquero (Havana) David Urgelles (Guantanamo)

Midfielders
Pedro Anderson (Artemisa),Yolexis Collado (Havana), Adrian Diz (Havana), Arichel Hernandez (Villa Clara), Daniel Luis (Havana), Dairon Perez (Havana), Jordan Santa Cruz (Cienfuegos)

Forwards
Osmani Capote (Villa Clara), Hector Morales (Havana), Maykel Reyes (Pinar del Rio), Randy Valier (Guantanamo)

Coach
Raul Gonzalez Triana

ENGLAND

Goalkeepers
Sam Johnstone (Manchester United), George Long (Sheffield United), Connor Ripley (Middlesbrough)

Defenders
Eric Dier (Sporting Lisbon, Por), Luke Garbutt (Everton), Jon Flanagan (Liverpool), Jamaal Lascelles (Nottingham Forest), Daniel Potts (West Ham United), Adam Reach (Middlesbrough), John Stones (Everton), Tom Thorpe (Manchester United)

Midfielders
Ross Barkley (Everton), Gael Bigirimana (Newcastle United), Conor Coady (Liverpool), Larnell Cole (Manchester United), John Lundstram (Everton), James Ward-Prowse (Southampton)

Forwards
Harry Kane (Tottenham Hotspur), Christopher Long (Everton), Alex Pritchard (Tottenham Hotspur), Luke Williams (Middlesbrough)

Coach
Peter Taylor

EGYPT

Goalkeepers
Mossad Awad (Al Ahly), Mahmoud Hamdi (Zamalek), Hassan Mahmoud (Arab Contractors)

Defenders
Abdalla El Hadad (Wadi Degla), El Hambaly Hammad (Wadi Degla), Metwaly Mahmoud (Ismaily), Wahid Mahmoud (ENPPI), Ibrahim Osama (ENPPI), Rabia Ramy (Al Ahly), El Hanafi Yasser (El Mansoura)

Midfielders
Refat Ahmed (ENPPI), Saleh Gomaa (ENPPI), Mahmoud Hamad (Ismaily), Ghaly Hossam (Al Ahly), Mahmoud Kahraba (ENPPI), El Shami Mohamed (Al Ahly), Sherif Mohamed (Ismaily), Mohamed Samir (El Dakhleya), Trezeguet (Al Ahly)

Forwards
Omar Bassam (Al Ahly), Ahmed Hassan Koka (Rio Ave, Por)

Coach
Rabie Yassin

EL SALVADOR

Goalkeepers
Carlos Canas (Longwood University, USA), Adolfo Menendez (FAS), Rolando Morales (Turin-FESA)

Defenders
Kevin Ayala (Turin-FESA), Oliver Ayala (Leon, Mex), Kevin Barahona (Turin-FESA), Marvin Baumgartner (Zurich, Swi), Miguel Lemus (Turin-FESA), Giovanni Zavaleta (Turin-FESA)

Midfielders
Diego Coca (Turin-FESA), Benjamin Diaz (Columbia University, USA), Rene Gomez (Turin-FESA), Tomas Granitto (Florida Gulf Coast University, USA), Jairo Henriquez (Turin-FESA), Romilio Hernandez (Baltimore Bays, USA), Bernardo Majano (DC United, USA), Oscar Rodriguez (Atletico San Jose), Jose Villavicencio (Turin-FESA)

Forwards
Roberto Gonzalez (Santa Tecla), Maikon Orellana (Brondby, Den), Jose Pena (Turin-FESA)

Coach
Mauricio Alfaro

THE SQUADS UNDER-20 WORLD CUP

FRANCE

Goalkeepers
Alphonse Areola (Paris Saint-Germain), Paul Charruau (Valenciennes), Maxime Dupe (Nantes)

Defenders
Lucas Digne (Lille), Dimitri Foulquier (Rennes), Christopher Jullien (Auxerre), Pierre Yves Polomat (Saint-Etienne), Youssouf Sabaly (Paris Saint-Germain), Mouhamadou-Naby Sarr (Lyon), Samuel Umtiti (Lyon), Kurt Zouma (Saint-Etienne)

Midfielders
Geoffrey Kondogbia (Sevilla, Spa), Mario Lemina (Lorient), Axel Ngando (Rennes), Paul Pogba (Juventus, Ita), Jordan Veretout (Nantes)

Forwards
Jean-Christophe Bahebeck (Troyes), Alexy Bosetti (Nice), Yaya Sanogo (Auxerre), Florian Thauvin (Bastia), Thibaut Vion (Porto, Por)

Coach
Pierre Mankowski

GHANA

Goalkeepers
Eric Ofori Antwi (Amidaus Professionals), Richard Ofori (Wa All Stars), Michael Sai (Berekum Chelsea)

Defenders
Princebell Addico (Bechem United), Jeremiah Arkorful (Tema Youth), Joseph Attamah (Tema Youth), Lawrence Lartey (Ashanti Gold), Richmond Nketiah (Medeama), Daniel Pappoe (Chelsea, Eng), Baba Rahman (Greuther Furth, Ger)

Midfielders
Clifford Aboagye (Inter Allies), Michael Anaba (Asante Kotoko), Alfred Duncan (Livorno, Ita), Moses Odjer (Tema Youth), Ebenezer Ofori (New Edubiase United), Seidu Salifu (Wa All Stars)

Forwards
Frank Acheampong (Anderlecht, Blg), Kennedy Ashia (Liberty Professionals), Ebenezer Assifuah (Liberty Professionals), Richmond Boakye (Sassuolo, Ita), Francis Narh (Tema Youth)

Coach
Sellas Tetteh

GREECE

Goalkeepers
Sokratis Dioudis (Aris), Nikolaos Giannakopoulos (Panionios), Stefanos Kapino (Panathinaikos)

Defenders
Mavroudis Bougaidis (AEK Athens), Dimitrios Goutas (Skoda Xanthi), Dimitris Konstantinidis (PAOK), Alexandros Kouros (Panionios), Nikolaos Marinakis (Panathinaikos), Konstantinos Triantafyllopoulos (Panathinaikos)

Midfielders
Panagiotis Ballas (Atromitos), Andreas Bouchalakis (Olympiakos), Spyros Fourlanos (Club Brugge, Blg), Dimitris Kolovos (Panionios), Dimitris Kourbelis (Asteras Tripoli), Charalambos Lykogiannis (Olympiakos), Dimitris Pelkas (PAOK), Kostas Stafylidis (Bayer Leverkusen, Ger)

Forwards
Anastasios Bakasetas (Asteras Tripoli), Dimitris Diamantakos (Olympiakos), Giannis Gianniotas (Fortuna Dusseldorf, Ger), Antonios Ranos (Skoda Xanthi)

Coach
Kostas Tsanas

IRAQ

Goalkeepers
Mohamed Hameed (Al Shorta), Fahad Talib (Al Quwa Al Jawiya), Ali Yaseen (Karbalaa)

Defenders
Ali Adnan (Baghdad), Ali Fayez (Erbil), Dhurgham Ismail (Al Shorta), Burhan Jumaah (Al Thawra), Mustafa Nadhim (Najaf), Saad Natiq Naji (Al Masafi), Mohammed Jabbar Rubat (Al Minaa)

Midfielders
Ammar Abdul-Hussein Al Asadi (Erbil), Hozan Ismail (Sulaymaniya), Ehab Kadhim (Al Talaba), Jawad Kadhim (Duhok), Mahdi Kamil (Al Shorta), Saif Salman (Duhok), Humam Tariq (Al Quwa Al Jawiya)

Forwards
Ali Qasim (Al Zawraa), Mohannad Abdul Raheem (Duhok), Farhan Shakor (Sulaymaniya), Mohammed Jabbar Shwkan (Al Quwa Al Jawiya)

Coach
Hakeem Shaker

MALI

Goalkeepers
Fofana Ahamadou (Jeanne D'Arc), Germain Berthe (Onze Createurs), Sory Traore (Bamako)

Defenders
Boubacar Diarra (TP Mazembe, DRC), Ichaka Diarra (Onze Createurs), Ousmane Keita (Korofina), Youssouf Kone (Bakaridjan), Issaka Samake (Stade Malien), Mahamadou Traore (Bakaridjan)

Midfielders
Mamadou Denon (Jeanne D'Arc), Abdoulaye Keita (Bastia, Fra), Adama Mariko (Korofina), Bakary Nimaga (Skenderbeu, Alb)

Forwards
Malick Berthe (Bamako), Samba Diallo (Djoliba), Tiecero Keita (Guingamp, Fra), Adama Niane (Nantes, Fra), Seydou Traore (Bakaridjan), Souleymane Sissoko (Korofina), Adama Traore (Cercle Olympique de Bamako), Hamidou Traore (Cercle Olympique de Bamako)

Coach
Moussa Keita

MEXICO

Goalkeepers
Alberto Gurrola (Atlas), Manuel Lajud (Cruz Azul), Richard Sanchez (Dallas, USA)

Defenders
Jose Abella (Santos Laguna), Antonio Briseno (Atlas), Francisco Flores (Cruz Azul), Abel Fuentes (Guadalajara), Bernardo Hernandez (Monterrey), Hedgardo Marin (Guadalajara), Jose Van Rankin (Pumas)

Midfielders
Jesus Manuel Corona (Monterrey), Jonathan Espericueta (Tigres), Arturo Gonzalez (Atlas), Raul Lopez (Guadalajara), Uvaldo Luna (Tigres), Carlos Trevino (Atlas), Armando Zamorano (Morelia)

Forwards
Marco Bueno (Pachuca), Jesus Escoboza (Necaxa), Guillermo Madrigal (Monterrrey), Julio Morales (Chivas USA)

Coach
Sergio Almaguer

NEW ZEALAND

Goalkeepers
Scott Basalaj (Lower Hutt City), Daniel Clarke (Team Wellington), Max Crocombe (Oxford United, Eng)

Defenders
Luke Adams (Derby County, Eng), Simon Arms (Auckland City), Liam Higgins (YoungHeart Manawatu), Storm Roux (Perth Glory, Aus), Alec Solomons (Team Wellington), Bill Tuiloma (Birkenhead United)

Midfielders
Tom Biss (Western Suburbs), Jese Edge (Ole Football Academy), Justin Gulley (Miramar Rangers), Cameron Howieson (Burnley, Eng), Rhys Jordan (Bristol City, Eng), Tim Payne (Blackburn Rovers, Eng)

Forwards
Tyler Boyd (Wellington Phoenix), Van Elia (Welington Olympic), Louis Fenton (Wellington Phoenix), Dale Higham (Wairarapa United), Ryan Thomas (Ole Football Academy), Hamish Watson (Lower Hutt City)

Coach
Chris Milicich

NIGERIA

Goalkeepers
John Felagha (Eupen, Blg), Chukwunenye Samuel Okani (Enyimba), Jonah Usman (ABS)

Defenders
Chizoba Johnbusco Amaefule (Dolphins), Kingsley Madu (El Kanemi Warriors), Onyinye Wifred Ndidi (Natalia Football Academy), Ikechukwu Okorie (Enyimba), Moses Orkuma (Lobi Stars), Abdullahi Shehu (Kano Pillars)

Midfielders
Uche Henry Agbo (Enyimba), Ovbokha Agboyi (Bayelsa United), Abdul Jeleel Ajagun (Dolphins), Michael Olaitan (Olympiakos, Gre), Chidi Emma Osuchukwu (Dolphins), Dumte Christian Pyagbara (Sharks)

Forwards
Samuel Emem Eduok (Dolphins), Edafe Egbedi (Aarhus, Den), Salisu Abdullahi Gero (Enugu Rangers), Olarenwaju Kayode (Heartland), Moses Daddy Simon (Ajax, Hol), Aminu Umar (Wikki Tourists)

Coach
John Obuh

THE SQUADS UNDER-20 WORLD CUP

PARAGUAY

Goalkeepers
Alejandro Bogado (Guarani), Diego Morel (Libertad), Armando Vera (Libertad)

Defenders
Junior Alonso (Cerro Porteno), Jorge Balbuena (Cerro Porteno), Aquilino Gimenez (Olimpia), Gustavo Gomez (Libertad), Miller Mareco (Rubio Nu), Teodoro Paredes (Cerro Porteno), Matias Perez (Nacional)

Midfielders
Miguel Almiron (Cerro Porteno), Angel Cardozo (Rubio Nu), Robert Piris (Rubio Nu), Ivan Ramirez (Libertad), Jorge Rojas (Benfica, Por)

Forwards
Claudio Correa (Sportivo Luqueno), Cecilio Dominguez (Sol de America), Derlis Gonzalez (Guarani), Brian Montenegro (Rubio Nu), Antonio Sanabria (Barcelona, Spa), Juan Villamayor (Libertad)

Coach
Victor Genes

PORTUGAL

Goalkeepers
Jose Sa (Maritimo), Bruno Varela (Benfica), Rafael Veloso (Belenenses)

Defenders
Joao Cancelo (Benfica), Tomas Dabo (Braga), Tiago Ferreira (Porto), Edgar Ie (Barcelona, Spa), Tiago Ilori (Sporting Lisbon), Kiko (Vitoria Setubal), Mica Pinto (Sporting Lisbon)

Midfielders
Ricardo Alves (Belenenses), Agostinho Ca (Barcelona, Spa), Andre Gomes (Benfica), Joao Mario (Sporting Lisbon), Tiago Silva (Belenenses), To Ze (Porto)

Forwards
Aladje (Aprilia, Ita), Bruma (Sporting Lisbon), Ivan Cavaleiro (Benfica), Ricardo Esgaio (Sporting Lisbon), Ricardo (Vitoria Guimaraes)

Coach
Edgar Borges

SOUTH KOREA

Goalkeepers
Ham Seok-Min (Soongsil University), Kim Dong-Joon (Yonsei University), Lee Chang-Keun (Busan IPark)

Defenders
Kang Yoon-Goo (Vissel Kobe, Jap), Kim Yong-Hwan (Soongsil University), Park Yong-Joon (Suwon Bluewings), Shim Sang-Min (Chung-Ang University), Song Joo-Hoon (Konkuk University), Woo Joo-Sung (Chung-Ang University), Yeon Je-Min (Suwon Bluewings)

Midfielders
Han Sung-Gyu (Kwangwoon University), Jung Hyun-Cheol (Dongguk University), Kang Sang-Woo (Kyung Hee University), Kim Sun-Woo (University of Ulsan), Kwon Chang-Hoon (Suwon Bluewings), Lee Chang-Min (Chung-Ang University), Nah Sung-Soo (Yokohama, Jap), Ryu Seung-Woo (Chung-Ang University)

Forwards
Jo Suk-Jae (Konkuk University), Kim Hyun (Seongnam Ilhwa Chunma), Lee Gwang-Hoon (Pohang Steelers)

Coach
Lee Kwang-Jong

SPAIN

Goalkeepers
Adrian Ortola (Villarreal), Daniel Sotres (Racing Santander), Ruben Yanez (Real Madrid)

Defenders
Jonny (Celta Vigo), Diego Llorente (Real Madrid), Javier Manquillo (Atletico Madrid), Derik Osede (Real Madrid), Israel Puerto (Sevilla)

Midfielders
Ager Aketxe (Athletic Bilbao), Juan Bernat (Valencia), Josa Campana (Sevilla), Jose Gaya (Valencia), Saul Niguez (Atletico Madrid), Denis Suarez (Manchester City, Eng) Suso (Liverpool, Eng), Oliver Torres (Atletico Madrid)

Forwards
Paco Alcacer (Getafe), Gerard Deulofeu (Barcelona), Ruben Garcia (Levante), Jese Rodriguez (Real Madrid), Jairo Samperio (Racing Santander)

Coach
Julen Lopetegui

TURKEY

Goalkeepers
Muhammed Alperen Uysal (Galatasaray), Aykut Ozer (Eintracht Frankfurt, Ger), Onurcan Piri (Giresunspor)

Defenders
Ahmet Yilmaz Calik (Genclerbirligi), Sadik Ciftpinar (Galatasaray), Hakan Cinemre (Fenerbahce), Ilkay Durmus (Genclerbirligi), Ethem Ercan Pulgir (Kartalspor), Fatih Turan (Fortuna Sittard, Hol)

Midfielders
Halil Akbunar (Goztepe), Cumali Bisi (Caykur Rizespor), Hakan Calhanoglu (Karlsruher, Ger), Taskin Calis (Gaziantepspor), Kerim Frei (Fulham, Eng), Alpaslan Ozturk (Beerschot, Blg), Enver Cenk Sahin (Istanbul BB), Salih Ucan (Fenerbahce), Okay Yokuslu (Kayserispor)

Forwards
Artun Akcakin (Genclerbirligi), Sinan Bakis (Bayer Leverkusen, Ger), Ibrahim Yilmaz (Darica Genclerbirligi)

Coach
Feyyaz Ucar

URUGUAY

Goalkeepers
Washington Aguerre (Penarol), Jonathan Cubero (Cerro), Guillermo De Amores (Liverpool)

Defenders
Maximiliano Amondarain (Progreso), Jose Maria Gimenez (Atletico Madrid, Spa), Federico Gino (Defensor Sporting), Iucas Olaza (River Plate), Gaston Silva (Defensor Sporting), Guillermo Varela (Manchester United, Eng), Emiliano Velazquez (Danubio)

Midfielders
Sebastian Cristoforo (Penarol), Giorgian De Arrascaeta (Defensor Sporting), Diego Laxalt (Internazionale, Ita), Leonardo Pais (Defensor Sporting), Gianni Rodriguez (Benfica, Por), Jim Varela (Penarol)

Forwards
Felipe Avenatti (River Plate), Ruben Bentancourt (PSV, Hol), Gonzalo Bueno (Nacional), Nicolas Lopez (Roma, Ita), Diego Rolan (Bordeaux, Fra)

Coach
Juan Verzeri

USA

Goalkeepers
Cody Cropper (Southampton, Eng), Kendall McIntosh (Santa Clara), Zackary Steffen (Maryland)

Defenders
Eric Miller (Creighton), Juan Ocegueda (Guadalajara, Mex), Shane O'Neill (Colorado Rapids), Oscar Sorto (Los Angeles Galaxy), Caleb Stanko (Freiburg, Ger), Javan Torre (UCLA), DeAndre Yedlin (Seattle Sounders)

Midfielders
Kellyn Acosta (Dallas), Luis Gil (Real Salt Lake), Benji Joya (Santos Laguna, Mex), Mikey Lopez (Sporting Kansas City), Wil Trapp (Columbus Crew)

Forwards
Daniel Cuevas (Santos Laguna, Mex), Daniel Garcia (Dallas), Alonso Hernandez (Monterrey, Mex), Victor Pineda (Chicago Fire), Mario Rodriguez (Kaiserslautern, Ger), Jose Villarreal (Los Angeles Galaxy)

Coach
Tab Ramos

UZBEKISTAN

Goalkeepers
Asilbek Amanov (Pakhtakor), Bakhodir Mirsoatov (Lokomotiv), Akmal Tursunbaev (Andijan)

Defenders
Azamat Abdullaev (Qizilqum Zarafshon), Maksimilian Fomin (Pakhtakor), Kamranbey Kapadze (Bunyodkor), Sardor Rakhmanov (Lokomotiv), Nodir Sanakulov (Nasaf Qarshi), Tohirjon Shamshitdinov (Guliston), Boburbek Yuldashov (Lokomotiv)

Midfielders
Jamshid Iskanderov (Pakhtakor), Vladimir Kozak (Pakhtakor), Abbosbek Makhstaliev (Pakhtakor), Jaloliddin Masharipov (Pakhtakor), Sardor Sabirkhodjaev (Bunyodkor), Diyorjon Turapov (Olmaliq), Mukhsinjon Ubaydullaev (Pakhtakor), Zabikhillo Urinboev (Bunyodkor)

Forwards
Jasurbek Khakimov (Pakhtakor), Igor Sergeev (Pakhtakor), Abdul Aziz Yusupov (Pakhtakor)

Coach
Akhmadjan Musaev

BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA: PREMIJER LIGA

Zeljeznicar are still way out in front

KEY DATES
Season starts
July 27, 2013
Season ends
May 30, 2014

In a country that is torn apart by political problems, and with its economy in collapse, Zeljeznicar offer one of the few consistencies in Bosnia with their three league titles in the last four seasons.

Since returning to the club in 2009, coach Amar Osim has moulded individual players into a team framework and his disciplined side dominates domestically. In 2012 Zeljeznicar became the first team to do the double since the post-war reunification and last term they became the first to successfully defend their league crown.

While continuing to rely on experienced players Muamer Svraka, Semir Kerla and Eldin Adilovic, Osim has rejuvenated

Point of order...Zeljeznicar's Svraka queries a refereeing decision

HUNGARY: NB I

New chapter for Pinter

Bundle of fun...Rok Kronaveter is submerged by his Gyor team-mates after scoring the winner against Ujpest last season

KEY DATES
Season starts
July 25, 2013
Season ends
June 1, 2014

Gyor, champions for the first time in 30 years last season, will start the new campaign as favourites but retaining the title will be a big ask for coach Attila Pinter.

Questions will be asked over how long Serb keeper Sasha Stefanovic, who is 39 in August, can continue, although hopes are high that right-winger Roland Varga will continue to blossom. Much will also be expected of new arrivals Rafe Wolfe, a Jamaican international defender from MTK, and Leandro Martinez, a left-sided Italo-Argentinian striker from Honved.

Having dominated Hungarian

his squad over the past two years and handed an opportunity to youngsters such as Nermin Zolotic.

Of Zeljeznicar's rivals, Sarajevo will probably muster the best challenge, although they will have to do so without their best striker, Emir Hadzic, who was the league's top scorer last term but has now joined Ironi Nir Ramat HaSharon in Israel.

Sarajavo's pre-season form was poor and coach Husref Musemic's side struggled in the Europa League first qualifying round against amateurs of Libertas from San Marino, achieving only a modest 1-0 win at home, courtesy of Alen Melunovic's 19th-minute goal, to go through 3-1 on aggregate.

Usually one of the most active clubs in the transfer window, Bosnian Cup winners Siroki Brijeg were very quiet this summer, while former Yugoslav league members Velez Mostar continue to opt for economical stabilization.

For the past few years the relegation battle has been extremely tight and that is unlikely to change.

Newly promoted Vitez and Mladost Velika Obarska will probably be involved – and neither are helped by the fact that they start the season playing away from their cities as their stadiums do not meet top-flight requirements.

Sasa Ibrulj

• For all this season's Premijer Liga fixtures, go to www.worldsoccer.com/world-service

"Stability within the club and unity among the fans is a recipe for success"

Zeljeznicar coach Amar Osim

football for so long, Debrecen are treading water, despite last term's Hungarian Cup success. The expected departure of Adamo Coulibaly, who was the league's top scorer last time out, will be a big blow for an ageing side who still include veteran midfielder Tibor Dombi in their ranks.

Ferencvaros will play their home games at the national Ferenc Puskas Stadion this term while their own stadium is being rebuilt and they are in buoyant mood after popular Dutch coach Ricardo Moniz agreed a new contract during the summer.

Less happy are several of the Diosgyor squad, who threatened to quit after the club appointed Serb disciplinarian Tomislav Sivic as their new coach. Sivic was replaced in charge at Paks by Ferenc Horvath.

Peterjon Cresswell

Staying at Ferencvaros...Ricardo Moniz

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MONTENEGRO: FIRST LEAGUE

Mogren are back in the game

Newcomer...international full-back Pejovic (in red) has joined Mogren

KEY DATES
Season starts
August 9, 2013
Season ends
(to be confirmed)

After only saving their top-flight status by winning a relegation play-off last term, Mogren approach this season as one of the title favourites.

Champions in 2009 and 2011, the club from the Adriatic holiday resort of Budva, have been busy during the summer. Key players Nikola Vujovic, Adis Djokovic and Mirko Radisic have all been retained, while the squad has been strengthened with the signing of midfielder Goran Burzanovic and central defender Miroslav Kaludjerovic from Zeta, holding midfielder Darko Markovic and winger Milan Djurisic arriving from Lovcen, and left-back Luka Pejovic, a Montenegro international, joining from Jagiellonia Biyalstok of Poland as a free agent.

Defending champions Sutjeska are likely to be in contention once again, with dark horses Zeta and Grbalj both expected to be more competitive this time.

Last year's Montenegrin Cup winners and league runners-up Buducnost have had a turbulent pre-season, with the club board stepping down.

Mornar, who like Mogren only survived via the play-offs, and promoted Decic look set for a battle against the drop.

Vladimir Novak & Dejan Panic

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NORTHERN IRELAND: PREMIERSHIP

Reds look for an encore

KEY DATES
Season starts
August 10, 2013
Season ends
May 3, 2014

After a magnificent league campaign in which they set the pace from start to finish, Cliftonville will be looking for a repeat performance this term. However, manager Tommy Breslin warns: "I remember the last time we won the league [in 1998] we ended up in a relegation play-off the following season. It's a question of whether the hunger to succeed is still there."

Breslin has strengthened his hand with the signing of Chris Curran from Ballinamallard United and will again look to last season's Premiership top scorer Liam Boyce, fellow striker Joe Gormley, midfielders Ryan Catney and Barry Johnston, winger Stephen Garrett and 21-year-old goalkeeper Conor Devlin.

On the debit side, the Reds have lost James Knowles to a Linfield side determined to take the title back from their rivals.

Last season was nothing less than catastrophic for a Linfield side who had won league-and-cup doubles in the previous half-dozen seasons, but who finished a humiliating 29 points adrift of Cliftonville in third place.

Manager David Jeffrey had a busy summer, signing goalkeeper Jonny Tuffey from St Johnstone and two key players from last season's Cup winners Glentoran: striker Andy Waterworth and defender Sean Ward. Waterworth made his mark immediately, scoring on his debut as Linfield won 2-0 against IF Fuglafjordur of the Faroe Islands in the Europa League qualifiers.

Runners-up Crusaders are always dangerous but Stephen Baxter's men seem fated yet again to be bridesmaid rather than bride. Glentoran still have to overcome the millstone of big financial problems, but manager Eddie Patterson has done well to snap up Jordan Hughes from relegated Distillery and striker Mark Miskimmon from Donegal Celtic, who also went down.

Despite several signings, promoted Ards, who are back in the top flight after seven years, and Warrenpoint Town, who were playing at the fourth level of the local game four years ago, will be favourites for the drop.

Roy Kitson

> "We have a strong squad, but it's a huge challenge to retain the title"
>
> Cliftonville manager Tommy Breslin

Important...Cliftonville's Johnston

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SLOVAKIA: SUPER LIGA

More of the same for double winners

Creative force...but Slovan will also be looking for goals from Milinkovic

KEY DATES
Season starts
July 12, 2013
Season ends
May 30, 2014

Double-winning coach Samuel Slovak will be hoping for more of the same this term as his Slovan Bratislava side attempt to win a fourth league title in six seasons.

With the backbone of the side still in place, goalkeeper Matus Putnocky, Argentinian centre-back Nicolas Gorosito, dynamic midfield captain Igor Zofcak and Trinidad & Tobago striker Lester Peltier remain key to Slovan's chances. Of this summer's additions to Slovak's squad, Serbian left-back Milos Josimov and Czech striker Pavel Fort have little recent top-flight experience.

Slovak will rely on attacking midfielder Erik Grendel, left-sided Serbian midfielder Marko Milinkovic and striker Juraj Halenar to create and score goals. He also has 22-year-old Akos Szarka, who is one of a handful of ethnic Hungarian Slovaks to have appeared for Slovakia's under-21 side, waiting in the wings.

In the fourth tier as recently as 2009, last season's runners-up

Building on success...Slovak

SLOVENIA: PRVA LIGA

Croat in charge of champions

KEY DATES
Season starts
July 12, 2013
Season ends
May 30, 2014

Anyone with ambitions of getting the better of double-winners Maribor this season will take some hope from the summer departure of coach Darko Milanic to Sturm Graz of Austria.

The man who led the side to four national titles in five years has been replaced by former Dinamo Zagreb boss Ante Cacic. As well as being relatively unknown, Cacic is a Croat which – considering Slovenia and Croatia's recent history of territorial disputes – may not please supporters of a club whose home ground is also the national stadium.

It is, however, business as usual on the pitch. Although Milanic took striker Robert Beric to Graz with him, club captain Marcos Tavares signed a five-year contract last term and the 29-year-old striker was on target as Maribor began their season by beating traditional rivals Olimpija 3-0 in the Slovenian Super Cup.

Goalkeeper Jasmin Handanovic, midfielder Ales Mertelj and Dejan Mezga, a midfielder who changed nationality from Croat to Slovene, should all have a part to play for Maribor this term and big things are also expected of Macedonian midfielder Agim Ibraimi.

Olimpija have lost Montenegrin striker Nikola Nikezic but coach Andrej Razdrh has brought in experienced Bosnian midfielder Zajko Zeba.

In finishing third last time out, Domzale showed flashes of the form that won the title in 2007 and 2008, and they will be looking for goals from new signing Josh Parker. At 22, the English-born striker has been capped by Antigua & Barbuda and used to play for QPR.

> "Look at the proportion of the population that attend matches – about every third villager goes to our games"
> Zavrc president Roman Vuk

New horizons...ex-QPR player Parker

Always packed with potential, but always struggling to deal with ownership and managerial issues behind the scenes, Koper, with ex-Lecce defender Rodolfo Vanoli as coach and former Italy under-18 forward Daniel Bradaschia, bring an Italian touch to the coastal club.

Zavrc, the village team right on the Slovene-Croat border, surprised even themselves by winning the second division last season. With a population little

Senica will be looking to maintain progress and have taken former Czech international Martin Zeman on loan from Sparta Prague.

Senica's local rivals Spartak Myjava finished their top-flight debut within one place of a European spot after starting last season not even knowing if their modest stadium would meet the league criteria. Ruzomberok striker Stefan Pekar was brought in during the summer, while stalwart captain Martin Cernacek remains to anchor the defence.

Trencin, who are owned by the former Holland international winger Tschen La Ling, are realistic title challengers under new coach Lubomir Nosicky. He replaces Adrian Gula who has taken over at Zilina.

An improving Kosice have lost coach Jan Kozak, who landed the national job after the 1-1 draw with Liechtenstein. His replacement is former assistant Jaroslav Galko.

Spartak Trnava, who were only saved from relegation on the final day of last season, have hired Zlate Moravce's Juraj Jarabek in the hope of turning things around.

Promoted Dunajska Streda, whose history has involved 15 name changes and a rise from the third tier, have taken striker Stefan Gerec from Ruzomberok.

Peterjon Cresswell

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> "I feel mixed emotions, as I had to leave a well-known place. I had very good people around me at Kosice"
>
> Jan Kozak, who left Kosice to become coach of the national team

Falling for the club...skipper Tavares is on a long-term deal at Maribor

bigger than their 1,000-capacity stadium, their best hope of staying up lies with 32-year-old former Croatia midfielder Nikola Safaric. After breaking through at Varteks Varazdin, Safaric lost his way and was treading water over the border in Hungary for Kaposvar when Zavrc came calling.

Peterjon Cresswell

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Joyous...Prestatyn celebrate their penalty shoot-out win over Liepajas Metalurgs

WALES: PREMIER LEAGUE

Euro glory for Prestatyn

KEY DATES

Season starts
August 23, 2013
Season ends
May 2014

Having lifted the Welsh Cup for the first time in May, when they beat Bangor City 3-1 in the Final, Prestatyn Town did Welsh football proud by winning their first-ever tie in Europe.

A goal from Neil Gibson in the 91st minute overturned a 2-1 first-leg home loss against Liepajas Metalurgs of Latvia in the first qualifying round of the Europa League and levelled the scores at 3-3 on aggregate before the visitors triumphed on penalties.

Welsh Premier League secretary Gwyn Derfel called it "an absolutely fantastic achievement for both Prestatyn Town and the league". He added: "European performances and results have been used unfairly to knock the league and our clubs. If people want to judge us on European results, look at what Prestatyn Town have achieved."

Despite beating seven-time Estonian champions Levadia Tallinn 1-0 in their first-ever European outing, Bala Town went out of the Europa League at the first time of asking, along with Airbus UK Broughton.

As for the league itself, as the only professional side, The New Saints start as undoubted favourites to retain their title. However, manager Craig Harrison has lost the services of midfielder Chris Jones and the recurrence of an Achilles injury could signal the end for long-serving former Wales defender Steve Evans.

Meanwhile, there are new starts for Ian Hughes, who steps up from assistant manager to replace his old boss Tomi Morgan at Aberystwyth Town, and Paul Evans, who comes in for Paul Reid at Afan Lido, who avoided the drop only because no club came up from the southern feeder league.

Rhyl return to the top flight after a two-season absence following their failure to get a domestic licence. Having swept all before them in the northern feeder league, manager Greg Strong realised he needed to strengthen his squad and has signed Northern Ireland under-21 midfielder Jonathan Breeze from Wigan Athletic despite competition from several English league clubs.

Mel Thomas

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FAROE ISLANDS

Seventh time lucky

EB/Streymur won a tie in Europe for the first time in seven attempts, beating Lusitans of Andorra 5-1 at home to progress to the second qualifying round of the Champions League 7-3 on aggregate.

Having come from 2-0 down with 10 men to earn a draw in the first leg, Runi Nolsoe's side won the return with goals from Arnbjorn Hansen, Levi Hanssen (two), Gunnar Zachariasen and Leif Niclasen.

ITALY

Players suspended

Torino striker Barreto and Genoa defender Giovanni Marchese were banned for three months and 10 days for failing to report alleged match-fixing in the Serie B game between Salernitana and Bari in May 2009. Davide Lanzafame of second-tier Catania was suspended for 16 months.

The Italian Super Cup, which was scheduled to be played in Beijing, will now be played at Rome's Stadio Olimpico, on August 18, as Juventus refused to travel and Lazio turned down alternative venues.

Suspended...Lanzafame

SAN MARINO

European first

Tre Penne's 1-0 victory at home to Armenian league winners Shirak in the Champions League first qualifying round may not have been enough to overturn a 3-0 first-leg deficit, but it did mean they became the first club from San Marino ever to win a game in Europe.

Club Results

EUROPE

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

1st qualifying round

1st legs - July 2; 2nd legs - July 9

Lusitans (And) v EB/Streymur (Far)
2-2, 1-5 (agg 3-7)
Shirak (Arm) v Tre Penne (SaM)
3-0, 0-1 (agg 3-1)

EUROPA LEAGUE

1st qualifying round

1st legs - July 2-4; 2nd legs - July 9-11

Astana (Kaz) v Botev Plovdiv (Bul)
0-1, 0-5 (agg 0-6)
Bala (Wal) v Levadia Tallinn (Est) 1-0, 1-3 (agg 2-3)
Breidablik (Ice) v FC Santa Coloma (And)
4-0, 0-0 (agg 4-0)
Broughton (Wal) v Ventspils (Lat)
1-1, 0-0 (agg 1-1, Ventspils on away goals)
Celik Niksic (Mne) v Honved (Hun)
1-4, 0-9 (agg 1-13)
Chikhura (Geo) v Vaduz (Lie)
0-0, 1-1 (agg 1-1, Chikhura on away goals)
Crusaders (Nir) v Rosenborg (Nor)
1-2, 2-7 (agg 3-9)
Domzale (Sln) v Astra (Rom) 0-1, 0-2 (agg 0-3)
Drogheda (Rol) v Malmo (Swe) 0-0, 0-2 (agg 0-2)
Flora Tallinn (Est) v Kukesi (Alb)
1-1, 0-0 (agg 1-1, Kukesi on away goals)
Gandzasar (Arm) v Aktobe (Kaz) 1-2, 1-2 (agg 2-4)
Hibernians (Mlt) v Vojvodina (Ser) 1-4, 2-3 (agg 3-7)
IBV Vestmannaeyjar (Ice) v HB Torshavn (Far)
1-1, 1-0 (agg 2-1)
IF Torshavn (Far) v Linfield (Nir) 0-2, 0-3 (agg 0-5)
Inter Baku (Aze) v Mariehamn (Fin)
1-1, 2-0 (agg 3-1)
Jeunesse Esch (Lux) v TPS Turku (Fin)
2-0, 1-2 (agg 3-2)
KR Reykjavik (Ice) v Glentoran (Nir)
0-0, 3-0 (agg 3-0)
Kruoja (Lit) v Dinamo Minsk (Bls) 0-3, 0-5 (agg 0-8)
La Fiorita (SaM) v Valletta (Mlt) 0-3, 0-1 (agg 0-4)
Laci (Alb) v Differdange (Lux) 0-1, 1-2 (agg 1-3)
Levski Sofia (Bul) v Irtysh Pavlodar (Kaz)
0-0, 0-2 (agg 0-2)
Metalurg Skopje (Mac) v Qarabag (Aze)
0-1, 0-1 (agg 0-2)
Milsami (Mol) v F91 Dudelange (Lux)
1-0, 0-0 (agg 1-0)
Prestatyn (Wal) v Liepajas Metalurgs (Lat)
1-2, 2-1 (aet) (agg 3-3, Prestatyn 4-3 on pens)
Rudar Pljevlja (Mne) v Mika (Arm)
1-0, 1-1 (agg 2-1)
Sarajevo (Bos) v Libertas (SaM) 1-0, 2-1 (agg 3-1)
Sliema Wanderers (Mlt) v Khazar Lankaran (Aze)
1-1, 0-1 (agg 1-2)
Suduva (Lit) v Turnovo (Mac)
2-2, 2-2 (aet) (agg 4-4, Turnovo 5-4 on pens)
Teteks (Mac) v Pyunik Yerevan (Arm)
1-1, 0-1 (agg 1-2)
Teuta Durres (Alb) v Dacia Chisinau (Mol)
3-1, 0-2 (agg 3-3, Dacia on away goals)
Tiraspol (Mol) v Skonto Riga (Lat)
0-1, 1-0 (aet) (agg 1-1, Skonto 4-2 on pens)
Torpedo Kutaisi (Geo) v Zilina (Slk)
0-3, 3-3 (agg 3-6)
Trans Narva (Est) v Gefle (Swe) 0-3, 1-5 (agg 1-8)
Tromso (Nor) v Celje (Sln) 1-2, 2-0 (agg 3-2)
UE Santa Coloma (And) v Zrinjski (Bos)
1-3, 0-1 (agg 1-4)
Videoton (Hun) v Mladost Podgorica (Mne)
2-1, 0-1 (agg 2-2, Mladost on away goals)
Vikingur (Far) v Inter Turku (Fin) 1-1, 1-0 (agg 2-1)
Zalgiris (Lit) v St Patrick's (Rol) 2-2, 2-1 (agg 4-3)

BELGIUM

League fixtures: opening round

July 26
Club Brugge v Charleroi
July 27
Genk v Ostend
Kortrijk v OH Leuven
Lierse v Zulte Waregem
Mons v Cercle Brugge
Waasland-Beveren v Gent
July 28
Anderlecht v Lokeren
Mechelen v Standard

BULGARIA

SUPER CUP

July 10 - Sofia
Ludogorets 1 (Dyakov 45+1)
Beroe 1 (Hristov 27)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 1,100. **Ref:** Yordanov
Beroe 5-3 on pens
Sent off: Dyakov (Ludogorets) 59min; Stoychev (Beroe) 65min

CROATIA

SUPER CUP

July 6 - Zagreb
Dinamo 1 (Cop 34)
Hajduk 1 (Caktas pen 76)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 12,000. **Ref:** Vucemilovic
Dinamo 4-1 on pens

CYPRUS

League fixtures: opening round

Aug 30-Sep 2
Alki v Aris
Anorthosis v Omonia
APOEL v ENP
Apollon v Ermis
Doxa v Nea Salamina
Ethnikos v AEL
Koukiia v AEK

CZECH REPUBLIC

SUPER CUP

July 12 - Plzen
Plzen 2 (Wagner 5, 90+3)
Jablonec 3 (Benes 57, Hubnik 63, Kopic 90+2)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 4,516. **Ref:** Zelinka

ENGLAND

League fixtures: opening rounds

Aug 17
Arsenal v Aston Villa
Liverpool v Stoke
Norwich v Everton
Sunderland v Fulham
Swansea v Manchester United
West Bromwich v Southampton
West Ham v Cardiff
Aug 18
Chelsea v Hull
Crystal Palace v Tottenham
Aug 19
Manchester City v Newcastle
Aug 24
Aston Villa v Liverpool
Everton v West Bromwich
Fulham v Arsenal
Hull v Norwich
Newcastle v West Ham
Southampton v Sunderland
Stoke v Crystal Palace
Aug 25
Cardiff v Manchester City
Tottenham v Swansea
Aug 26
Manchester United v Chelsea

FRANCE

League fixtures: opening rounds

Aug 9
Montpellier v Paris Saint-Germain
Aug 10
Bordeaux v Monaco
Evian TG v Sochaux
Lille v Lorient
Lyon v Nice
Nantes v Bastia
Rennes v Reims
Valenciennes v Toulouse
Aug 11
AC Ajaccio v Saint-Etienne
Guingamp v Marseille
Aug 17/18
Bastia v Valenciennes
Lorient v Nantes
Marseille v Evian TG
Monaco v Montpellier
Nice v Rennes
Paris Saint-Germain v AC Ajaccio
Reims v Lille
Saint-Etienne v Guingamp
Sochaux v Lyon
Toulouse v Bordeaux

GERMANY

League fixtures: opening rounds

Aug 9
Bayern Munich v Monchengladbach
Aug 10
Augsburg v Borussia Dortmund
Bayer Leverkusen v Freiburg
Eintracht Braunschweig v Werder Bremen
Hanover v Wolfsburg
Hertha Berlin v Eintracht Frankfurt
Hoffenheim v Nuremberg
Aug 11
Mainz v Stuttgart
Schalke v Hamburg
Aug 17
Eintracht Frankfurt v Bayern Munich
Freiburg v Mainz
Hamburg v Hoffenheim
Monchengladbach v Hanover
Stuttgart v Bayer Leverkusen
Werder Bremen v Augsburg
Wolfsburg v Schalke
Aug 18
Borussia Dortmund v Eintracht Braunschweig
Nuremberg v Hertha Berlin

GREECE

League fixtures: opening round

Aug 17/18
Apollon v Aris
Asteras v Giannina
Atromitos v Ergotelis
Kalloni v Olympiakos
Levadiakos v Panthrakikos
OFI v Panionios
Panathinaikos v Panetolikos
PAOK v Xanthi
Platanias v Veria

HOLLAND

League fixtures: opening round

Aug 2
Ajax v Roda JC
Aug 3
Den Haag v PSV
Heerenveen v AZ
NEC v Groningen
Twente v RKC
Aug 4
Cambuur v NAC
Utrecht v Go Ahead Eagles
Vitesse v Heracles
Zwolle v Feyenoord

HUNGARY

SUPER CUP

July 13 - Budapest
Gyor 3 (Trajkovic 32, Koltai 45, Kalmar 85)
Debrecen 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 4,000. **Ref:** Ando-Szabo

ISRAEL

League fixtures: opening round

Aug 24/25
Acre v Maccabi Tel Aviv
Beitar v Be'er Sheva
Bnei Yehuda v Ashdod
Hapoel Tel Aviv v Bnei Sakhnin
Maccabi Haifa v Kiryat Shmona
Ra'anana v Maccabi Petah Tikva
Ramat HaSharon v Hapoel Haifa

LATVIA

LATVIAN CUP

Final

May 18 - Riga (Skonto)
Liepajas Metalurgs 1 (Jemelins 43)
Ventspils 2 (Yanchuk 72, Dubra 93)
Aet. **HT:** 1-0. **90mins:** 1-1. **Att:** 1,100. **Ref:** Treimanis
Sent off: Prohorenkovs (Metalurgs) 107min

LITHUANIA

LITHUANIAN CUP

Final

May 19 - Kaunas (S Darius & S Girenas)
Zalgiris 3 (Svrljuga 13, Skerla 45+1, Gerc 91)
Siauliai 3 (Vaskela 5, Raso 34, Birskys 98)
Aet. **HT:** 2-2. **90mins:** 2-2. **Att:** 2,500. **Ref:** Dunauskas
Zalgiris 8-7 on pens

BRAZIL

Atletico lights go out

Atletico Mineiro overturned a 2-0 first-leg deficit in controversial circumstances in the return game, drawing level with Newell's Old Boys before going on to win on penalties and secure a place in the Libertadores Cup Final.

Despite Bernard's early goal for the hosts, Newell's appeared to be heading for victory on aggregate until a power failure 10 minutes from time at the Estadio Raimundo Sampaio.

After a 20-minute break, Guilherme equalised for the hosts when the lights came back. Atletico keeper Victor was then the shoot-out hero as he saved Maxi Rodriguez's spot-kick to set up a Final clash with Paraguay's Olimpia.

Final...Atletico's Pierre (right)

ECUADOR

Opening champions

Emelec clinched the opening stage of the national championship with a game to spare after beating Universidad Catolica 1-0 with a goal from Cristian Nasuti. It was the 30-year-old Argentinian defender's second goal in four days, after he scored the only goal of the game against Deportivo Cuenca.

Sudamericana Cup champions in 2011, LDU Quito claimed second spot with a 2-1 win away to Universidad Catolica, while Independiente beat Manta 3-0 to finish third.

Federico Gaston, who joined Deportivo Quito from Brazil's Atletico Paranaense in pre-season, was the league's top scorer with 19 goals in 20 appearances.

MOLDOVA

SUPER CUP

June 29 - Tiraspol
Sheriff 2 (Isa 10, Balima 59)
Tiraspol 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 2,500. **Ref:** Derenov

NORWAY

June 29: Molde 3 Sarpsborg 1; Brann 6 Sandnes Ulf 1; Stromsgodset 3 Tromso 1; Sogndal 1 Honefoss 1.
June 30: Lillestrom 0 Valerenga 1; Odd 4 Haugesund 0; Start 2 Aalesund 2; Viking 0 Rosenborg 0.
July 6: Aalesund 2 Sogndal 2; Haugesund 2 Stromsgodset 1.
July 7: Tromso 2 Molde 3; Sandnes Ulf 3 Start 1; Rosenborg 1 Lillestrom 0; Sarpsborg 0 Odd 1; Valerenga 2 Viking 2.
July 8: Honefoss 1 Brann 1.
July 12: Honefoss 1 Valerenga 2.
July 13: Molde 1 Viking 1; Start 3 Brann 3.
July 14: Haugesund 1 Aalesund 2; Sandnes Ulf 2 Stromsgodset 1; Tromso 2 Sogndal 2; Sarpsborg 0 Lillestrom 1; Rosenborg 3 Odd 2.

NORWAY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rosenborg	16	10	4	2	28	14	34
Stromsgodset	16	10	2	4	31	14	32
Aalesund	16	8	4	4	32	22	28
Brann	16	8	2	6	27	22	26
Viking	16	7	5	4	19	16	26
Haugesund	16	7	2	7	20	23	23
Sogndal	16	5	7	4	23	25	22
Valerenga	16	6	3	7	21	25	21
Tromso	16	5	5	6	25	22	20
Molde	16	4	6	6	25	24	18
Odd	16	5	3	8	18	18	18
Lillestrom	16	5	3	8	19	25	18
Sarpsborg	16	4	5	7	19	30	17
Honefoss	16	3	7	6	18	23	16
Sandnes Ulf	16	4	4	8	16	27	16
Start	16	3	6	7	22	33	15

30-round season (15x2); bottom 2 will be relegated, 3rd bottom will enter rel/prom play-off

PORTUGAL

League fixtures: opening round

Aug 17/18
Belenenses v Rio Ave
Estoril v Nacional
Gil Vicente v Academica
Guimaraes v Olhanense
Maritimo v Benfica
Pacos de Ferreira v Braga
Setubal v Porto
Sporting v Arouca

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

June 28: Derry 2 Bohemians 1; Drogheda 0 Shamrock 3; St Patrick's 2 Bray 0; UCD 3 Cork 0; Shelbourne 0 Sligo 2.
June 29: Limerick 3 Dundalk 2.
July 5: Bohemians 0 Limerick 1; Bray 0 Shamrock 0; Cork 3 Sligo 1; Derry 0 Dundalk 1.
July 7: Drogheda 0 Shelbourne 0.
July 8: Limerick 4 Bray 4.
July 12: Dundalk 3 Bohemians 0; Shamrock 2 Derry 1; Shelbourne 2 Cork 1.
July 14: UCD 2 Drogheda 2; Sligo 1 St Patrick's 1.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
St Patrick's	20	13	4	3	34	11	43
Sligo	20	11	6	3	34	14	39
Derry	20	12	3	5	39	22	39
Dundalk	20	12	3	5	31	21	39
Shamrock	20	8	10	2	26	11	34
Limerick	20	6	8	6	28	26	26
Cork	20	6	5	9	21	29	23
Drogheda	20	4	9	7	27	31	21
Bray	20	5	4	11	26	44	19
UCD	20	5	3	12	30	48	18
Bohemians	20	3	5	12	14	34	14
Shelbourne	20	3	4	13	11	30	13

33-round season (11x3); bottom team will be relegated, 2nd bottom will enter rel/prom play-off

ROMANIA

SUPER CUP

July 10 - Bucharest
Steaua 3 (Nikolic 21, Szukala 32, Pintilii 41)
Petrolul 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 29,459. **Ref:** Hategan
Sent off: Enza-Yamissi (Petrolul) 28min

RUSSIA

SUPER CUP

July 13 - Rostov-on-Don
CSKA 3 (Honda 15, 83, Ignashevich 36)
Zenit 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Egorov

SCOTLAND

League fixtures: opening round

Aug 2
Partick v Dundee United
Aug 3
Aberdeen v Kilmarnock
Celtic v Ross County
Inverness v St Mirren
St Johnstone v Hearts
Aug 4
Hibernian v Motherwell

SERBIA

League fixtures: opening round

Aug 10/11
Jagodina v Napredak
Javor v Red Star
OFK v Hajduk
Partizan v Novi Pazar
Rad v Cukaricki
Radnicki Nis v Radnicki 1923
Sloboda v Spartak
Vojvodina v Donji Srem

SLOVENIA

SUPER CUP

July 7 - Celje
Maribor 3 (Tavares 25, Mezga 45, Cvijanovic 63)
Olimpija 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 1,800. **Ref:** Ceferin

SPAIN

League fixtures: opening rounds

Aug 17/18
Almeria v Villarreal
Barcelona v Levante
Celta Vigo v Espanyol
Osasuna v Granada
Rayo Vallecano v Elche
Real Madrid v Betis
Real Sociedad v Getafe
Sevilla v Atletico Madrid
Valencia v Malaga
Valladolid v Athletic Bilbao
Aug 24/25
Athletic Bilbao v Osasuna
Atletico Madrid v Rayo Vallecano
Betis v Celta Vigo
Elche v Real Sociedad
Espanyol v Valencia
Getafe v Almeria
Granada v Real Madrid
Levante v Sevilla
Malaga v Barcelona
Villarreal v Valladolid

SWEDEN

June 24: AIK 4 Brommapojkarna 0; Gefle 1 Djurgarden 1; Gothenburg 4 Mjallby 2; Oster 0 Norrkoping 2; Malmo 2 Elfsborg 1.
June 27: Malmo 1 Hacken 3; Helsingborg 1 AIK 2.
June 30: Elfsborg 5 Syrianska 1; Djurgarden 2 Oster 0.
July 1: Atvidaberg 4 Brommapojkarna 1; AIK 0 Mjallby 0.
July 6: Mjallby 1 Oster 1; Brommapojkarna 0 Kalmar 1; Elfsborg 0 Atvidaberg 1.
July 7: Malmo 3 Gefle 1; AIK 2 Hacken 0; Syrianska 1 Halmstad 2.
July 8: Helsingborg 1 Gothenburg 1.
July 13: Brommapojkarna 2 Gothenburg 1; Hacken 0 Kalmar 1; Elfsborg 2 Halmstad 2.
July 14: Gefle 2 Norrkoping 2; Mjallby 2 Djurgarden 0; Syrianska 1 AIK 2; Malmo 4 Atvidaberg 0.

SWEDEN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Malmo	16	9	5	2	31	18	32
AIK	16	8	5	3	26	16	29
Gothenburg	16	8	5	3	23	14	29
Helsingborg	14	8	4	2	31	11	28
Elfsborg	16	7	6	3	29	15	27
Kalmar	16	7	6	3	19	12	27
Atvidaberg	16	8	2	6	21	17	26
Mjallby	16	7	3	6	28	23	24
Hacken	16	6	2	8	19	23	20
Norrkoping	15	5	4	6	22	24	19
Djurgarden	15	4	4	7	11	25	16
Gefle	16	2	8	6	17	26	14
Oster	15	3	4	8	13	21	13
Halmstad	15	2	7	6	14	23	13
Bromm'karna	16	3	4	9	16	34	13
Syrianska	16	2	3	11	13	31	9

30-round season (15x2); bottom 2 will be relegated, 3rd bottom will enter rel/prom play-off

SWITZERLAND

July 13: Basle 3 Aarau 1; Young Boys 2 Sion 0.
July 14: Zurich 3 Thun 2; Lucerne 2 Lausanne 0; St Gallen 0 Grasshopper 2.

SWITZERLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Basle	1	1	0	0	3	1	3
Grasshopper	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Lucerne	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Young Boys	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Zurich	1	1	0	0	3	2	3
Thun	1	0	0	1	2	3	0
Aarau	1	0	0	1	1	3	0
Lausanne	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Sion	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
St Gallen	1	0	0	1	0	2	0

36-round season (9x4); bottom team will be relegated

UKRAINE

July 12: Tavriya 0 Zorya 2.
July 13: Metalurh Zaporizhya 0 Illichivets 1; Dnipro 3 Arsenal 0.
July 14: Karpaty 0 Vorskla 2; Shakhtar 2 Hoverla 0; Dynamo 1 Volyn 1; Sevastopol 1 Chornomorets 1.

UKRAINE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dnipro	1	1	0	0	3	0	3
Shakhtar	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Vorskla	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Zorya	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Illichivets	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Chornomorets	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Dynamo	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Sevastopol	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Volyn	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Metalist	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Metalurh D	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Metalurh Z	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Hoverla	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Karpaty	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Tavriya	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Arsenal	1	0	0	1	0	3	0

30-round season (15x2); bottom 2 will be relegated

SUPER CUP

July 10 - Odesa
Chornomorets 1 (Antonov 45+1)
Shakhtar 3 (Fred 17, 33, Taison pen 68)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 32,400. **Ref:** Boiko

SOUTH AMERICA

RECOPA

(2012 Libertadores Cup winners, Corinthians v 2012 Sudamericana Cup winners, Sao Paulo)

1st leg

July 3
Sao Paulo (Bra) 1 (Aloisio 46)
Corinthians (Bra) 2 (Guerrero 30, Renato Augusto 76)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 31,691. **Ref:** Marques Ribeiro (Bra)
Sao Paulo: Rogerio Ceni - Douglas (Wellington 46), Lucio, Rafael Toloi, Juan, Jadson, Rodrigo Caio, Denilson (Lucas Evangelista 80), Ganso (Aloisio 46), Osvaldo, Luis Fabiano.
Corinthians: Cassio - Edenilson, Gil, Paulo Andre, Fabio Santos, Ralf, Guilherme, Romarinho, Danilo (Douglas 29; Renato Augusto 53), Emerson Sheikh (Ibson 82), Guerrero.

LIBERTADORES CUP

Semi-finals

1st legs

July 2
Olimpia (Par) 2 (Miranda pen 66, Ferreyra 81)
Independiente Santa Fe (Col) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Lopes (Bra)
Olimpia: M Silva - Manzur, Miranda, Candia, Pittoni (Ferreyra 46; Prono 84), Mazacotte (A Silva 46), Aranda, Benitez, Gimenez, Bareiro, Salgueiro.
Sent off: Salgueiro 45+1min.
Santa Fe: Vargas - Anchico, Valdes, Meza, Garcia, Torres, Bedoya, Valencia (Roa 74), Medina, Perez, Cuero (Martinez Borja 85). *Sent off: Bedoya 45+1min.*

PARAGUAY

Nacional win apertura

Nacional made amends for missing out on the 2012 clausura – in which they finished three points behind Libertad – by claiming this year's apertura.

Unlike Libertad, Cerro Porteno and eventual finalists Olimpia, Gustavo Morinigo's side were unburdened by the demands of playing in the Libertadores Cup and they wrapped up their ninth domestic championship with a month to spare.

Despite losing their last four games of the campaign, Nacional still finished six points clear of runners-up Guarani to provide skipper Raul Piris with a third national title.

Nacional lost their main goal threat Rodrigo Teixeira to Guarani before the start of the season, but they got Julian Benitez in return as part of the deal and he found the net 13 times to finish as the competition's top scorer. Teixeira was in second place with 10.

Benitez, however, will not be around when Nacional begin their 2014 Libertadores campaign as he joined LDU Quito of Ecuador in July.

Champions...Nacional

BURUNDI

Regional success

Vital'O won the CECAFA Club Championship, beating APR of Rwanda 2-0 in the Final with goals from Amisi Tambwe – who was the tournament's top scorer with six – and Christian Mbirizi. El Merreikh, of the host nation Sudan, beat Rwanda's Rayon Sport 1-0 to take third place.

July 3
Newell's Old Boys (Arg) 2 (Rodriguez 62, Scocco 81)
Atletico Mineiro (Bra) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Osses (Chl)
Newell's: Guzman - Caceres, Vergini, Heinze, Casco, Figueroa (Tonso 78), Perez (Cruzado 79), Mateo, Bernardi, Rodriguez, Scocco (Urruti 90).
Mineiro: Victor - Marcos Rocha, Gilberto Silva, Rafael Marques, Richarlyson, Pierre, Josue, Diego Tardelli (Luan 69), Ronaldinho, Bernard, Jo (Guilherme 90+1).

2nd legs
July 9
Independiente Santa Fe 1 (Medina 76)
Olimpia 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Vazquez (Uru)
Olimpia 2-1 on agg
Santa Fe: Vargas - Roa (Centurion 86), Valdes, Meza, Acosta, Molina (Martinez Borja 7), Anchico, Torres, Perez, Medina, Cuero (Lalinde 61).
Olimpia: M Silva - Manzur, Miranda, Candia, A Silva, Pittoni, Aranda, Bareiro, Prono (Castorino 46; Paredes 74), Gimenez (Mazacotte 46), Benitez.

July 10
Atletico Mineiro 2 (Bernard 3, Guilherme 84)
Newell's Old Boys 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Silvera (Uru)
Agg 2-2; Mineiro 3-2 on pens
Mineiro: Victor - Marcos Rocha, Leonardo Silva, Gilberto Silva, Richarlyson, Pierre (Luan 77), Josue, Diego Tardelli (Alecsandro 82), Ronaldinho, Bernard (Guilherme 82), Jo.
Newell's: Guzman - Caceres (Orzan 89), Vergini, Heinze (Lopez 26), Casco, Bernardi, Mateo, Cruzado, Figueroa (Tonso 73), Scocco, Rodriguez.

SUDAMERICANA CUP

1st round draw

Montevideo Wanderers (Uru) v Libertad (Par) (G1)
Cobreloa (Chl) v Penarol (Uru) (G2)
Real Potosi (Bol) v Universidad de Chile (Chl) (G3)
Guarani (Par) v Oriente Petrolero (Bol) (G4)
El Tanque Sisley (Uru) v Colo Colo (Chl) (G5)
Blooming (Bol) v River Plate (Uru) (G6)
Universidad Catolica (Chl) v Cerro Porteno (Par) (G7)
Nacional (Par) v The Strongest (Bol) (G8)
Inti Gas (Per) v Atletico Nacional (Col) (G9)
Mineros de Guayana (Ven) v Barcelona (Ecu) (G10)
Independiente del Valle (Ecu) v Anzoategui (Ven) (G11)
Itagui (Col) v Juan Aurich (Per) (G12)
Sport Huancayo (Per) v Emelec (Ecu) (G13)
Deportivo Pasto (Col) v Melgar (Per) (G14)
Trujillanos (Ven) v La Equidad (Col) (G15)
LDU Loja (Ecu) v Deportivo Lara (Ven) (G16)
1st legs - July 30-Aug 1; 2nd legs - Aug 6-8

2nd round draw

G1 winner v G10 winner
G2 winner v G15 winner
G3 winner v G11 winner
G4 winner v G9 winner
G5 winner v G14 winner
G6 winner v G12 winner
G7 winner v G13 winner
G8 winner v G16 winner
Brazil 5th reps v Brazil 4th reps
Brazil 6th reps v Brazil 3rd reps
Brazil 7th reps v Brazil 2nd reps
Brazil 8th reps v Brazil 1st reps
Belgrano (Arg) v Velez Sarsfield (Arg)
Racing (Arg) v Lanus (Arg)
San Lorenzo (Arg) v River Plate (Arg)

Bye to 3rd round: Sao Paulo (Bra; holders)

ARGENTINA

Overall 2012-13 season play-off

(1st tournament winners, Newell's v 2nd tournament winners, Velez)
Single-tie game

June 29 - Mendoza (Malvinas Argentinas)
Velez Sarsfield 1 (Pratto 9)
Newell's Old Boys 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Pitana
Sent off: Cubero (Velez) 28min

2013-14 1st tournament fixtures: opening round

Aug 3/4
All Boys v Atletico Rafaela
Arsenal v Estudiantes
Boca Juniors v Newell's Old Boys
Colon v Racing
Gimnasia La Plata v River Plate
Godoy Cruz v Argentinos Juniors
Lanus v Belgrano
Rosario Central v Quilmes
San Lorenzo v Olimpo
Tigre v Velez Sarsfield

BRAZIL

July 6: Flamengo 2 Coritiba 2; Nautico 1 Ponte Preta 3; Paranaense 1 Gremio 1; Portuguesa 1 Cruzeiro 1.
July 7: Sao Paulo 0 Santos 2; Bahia 0 Corinthians 2; Internacional 5 Vasco 3; Goias 1 Vitoria 0; Botafogo 1 Fluminense 0; Mineiro 3 Criciuma 2.
July 10: Sao Paulo 1 Bahia 2.
July 13: Fluminense 2 Internacional 3; Santos 4 Portuguesa 1; Ponte Preta 0 Bahia 0.
July 14: Corinthians 0 Mineiro 1; Vitoria 3 Sao Paulo 2; Gremio 2 Botafogo 1; Coritiba 1 Paranaense 0; Vasco 0 Flamengo 1; Criciuma 0 Goias 0; Cruzeiro 3 Nautico 0.

BRAZIL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Coritiba	7	4	3	0	9	5	15
Vitoria	7	4	1	2	13	8	13
Botafogo	7	4	1	2	10	7	13
Cruzeiro	7	3	3	1	15	7	12
Internacional	7	3	3	1	16	12	12
Gremio	7	3	3	1	8	6	12
Bahia	8	3	3	2	8	9	12
Santos	7	3	2	2	10	7	11
Mineiro	7	3	1	3	7	7	10
Fluminense	7	3	0	4	11	10	9
Flamengo	7	2	3	2	8	7	9
Corinthians	7	2	3	2	5	4	9
Goias	7	2	3	2	5	9	9
Sao Paulo	8	2	2	4	11	10	8
Ponte Preta	7	2	1	4	8	10	7
Criciuma	7	2	1	4	8	13	7
Vasco	7	2	1	4	8	14	7
Portuguesa	7	1	4	2	7	10	7
Paranaense	7	1	3	3	12	14	6
Nautico	7	1	1	5	4	14	4

38-round season (19x2); bottom 4 will be relegated

COLOMBIA

Apertura play-offs

APERTURA PLAY-OFFS – GROUP A – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Santa Fe (Q)	6	3	2	1	7	5	11
Millonarios	6	3	1	2	10	8	10
Dep Cali	6	1	4	1	6	6	7
Once Caldas	6	1	1	4	8	12	4

APERTURA PLAY-OFFS – GROUP B – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nacional (Q)	6	3	1	2	9	8	10
Itagui	6	3	0	3	8	9	9
Tolima	6	2	2	2	8	7	8
Pasto	6	2	1	3	8	9	7

Group winners enter apertura championship Final

ECUADOR

ECUADOR – 1ST STAGE – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Emelec[1]	22	14	3	5	28	17	45
LDU Quito	22	12	5	5	26	19	41
Independiente	22	12	3	7	37	25	39
Dep Quito	22	10	8	4	41	24	38
Barcelona	22	11	5	6	33	19	38
Univ Catolica	22	9	6	7	34	35	33
El Nacional	22	8	2	12	29	33	26
Cuenca	22	6	7	9	29	36	25
Quevedo	22	6	5	11	26	34	23
Manta	22	5	7	10	26	33	22
LDU Loja	22	3	8	11	21	33	17
Macara	22	3	7	12	14	36	16

[1]Emelec will meet winners of 2nd stage for the overall championship title

PARAGUAY

PARAGUAY – APERTURA – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nacional (C)	22	15	1	6	40	25	46
Guarani	22	11	7	4	38	21	40
Cerro Porteno	22	11	4	7	38	29	37
Libertad	22	10	6	6	29	23	36
Olimpia	22	8	7	7	31	31	31
Sol America	22	7	8	7	30	34	29
General Diaz	22	7	7	8	25	27	28
Capiata	22	7	6	9	25	30	27
Rubio Nu	22	6	7	9	27	29	25
Luqueno	22	6	7	9	19	25	25
C Porteno PF	22	4	7	11	27	38	19
Carapegua	22	3	7	12	22	39	16

No relegation after apertura

CONCACAF

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group stage draw

Group 1
Arabe Unido (Pan)
Houston Dynamo (USA)
W Connection (T&T)

Group 2
Kansas City (USA)
Olimpia (Hnd)
Real Esteli (Nic)

Group 3
Cruz Azul (Mex)
Herediano (CR)
Valencia (Hai)

Group 4
Alajuelense (CR)
America (Mex)
San Miguelito (Pan)

Group 5
Heredia (Gtm)
Montreal Impact (Can)
San Jose Earthquakes (USA)

Group 6
Caledonia AIA (T&T)
Comunicaciones (Gtm)
Toluca (Mex)

Group 7
Luis Angel Firpo (ESv)
Tijuana (Mex)
Victoria (Hnd)

Group 8
Cartagines (CR)
Isidro Metapan (ESv)
Los Angeles Galaxy (USA)

Matchdays: *Aug 6-8, Aug 20-22, Aug 27-29, Sep 17-19, Sep 24-26, Oct 22-24*

Group winners qualify for quarter-finals

CUBA

Clausura

Final
1st leg - June 7; 2nd leg - June 12
Pinar del Rio v Villa Clara 0-3, 0-4 (agg 0-7)

EL SALVADOR

Clausura

Final
May 26 - San Salvador (Cuscatlan)
FAS 0
Luis Angel Firpo 3 (Canales pen 7, Guevara 55, Trejo 66)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Carpio
Sent off: Flores 56min, Granadino 56min (both FAS)

FRENCH GUIANA

FRENCH GUIANA – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts[1]
Le Geldar (C)	22	15	7	0	45	13	74
Matoury	22	14	6	2	41	15	70
CSC	22	13	5	4	35	22	66
Agouado	22	8	7	7	31	29	53
Saint-Georges	22	8	6	8	30	31	52
Macouria	22	6	9	7	23	27	49
Sinnamary[2]	22	7	6	9	23	25	48
Javouhey	22	5	10	7	23	28	47
Iracoubo	22	6	4	12	23	34	44
Black Stars	22	4	7	11	21	26	41
Remire (R)	22	3	10	9	17	28	41
Olympique (R)	22	4	1	17	16	50	35

[1]4pts for a win, 2pts for a draw, 1pt for a defeat
[2]1pt deducted

GUADELOUPE

GUADELOUPE – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts[1]
Moulien (C)	26	16	7	3	42	14	81
L'Etoile[2]	26	15	4	7	35	22	74
La Gauloise	26	12	9	5	40	29	71
Sainte-Rose	26	12	8	6	41	30	70
Baie-Mahault	26	12	7	7	30	24	69
Vieux-Hab'nts	26	9	9	8	32	24	62
Gosier	26	9	8	9	22	24	61
Siroco[3]	26	9	8	9	29	25	59
Juventus	26	8	9	9	22	21	59
AJSS	26	7	10	9	34	36	57
Amical	26	8	4	14	30	43	54
Lam'nois[2] (R)	26	7	5	14	23	42	51
Evolucas (R)	26	5	6	15	28	42	47
Phare du C (R)	26	2	8	16	15	47	40

[1]4pts for a win, 2pts for a draw, 1pt for a defeat
[2]1pt deducted [3]2pts deducted

GAMBIA

Victory at last for Biko

Steve Biko ended a run of seven games without a win to beat Hawks 1-0 on the final day of the season to clinch the league title.

GHANA

Asante retain title

Asante Kotoko wrapped up the Ghanaian Premier League with a 1-0 victory over Amidaus Professionals on the last day of the campaign. A goal from Emmanuel Baffour gave his side their second successive title – and 23rd in total – as they finished three points clear of Berekum Chelsea, who lost 2-1 to Heart of Lions.

Hearts of Oak striker Mahatma Otoo scored all three goals in his side's 3-0 win over relegated Tema Youth to top the league scoring charts with 20.

Bechem United have returned to the top flight after just one season in the second tier. Inter Allies and Hasaacas are also promoted.

Medeama denied Asante the double, beating them 1-0 in the Cup Final with a goal in extra time from Theophilus Anaba.

Title winner...Baffour

MAURITANIA

Double figure finale

Nouadhibou won the league championship in emphatic style, thrashing El Ahmedi 10-0 on the final day of the season to secure their fourth title.

Nouadhibou's coach Njoya Mezack was also a title winner last season, with Sewe Sport in the Ivory Coast.

GUATEMALA

Clausura

Final, 1st leg

June 19

Heredia 1 (De Souza 25)

Comunicaciones 2 (Suarez 35, Figueroa 84)

HT: 1-1. **Att:** 2,769. **Ref:** Leonardo

Sent off: Figueroa (Comunicaciones) 85min

Final, 2nd leg

June 22

Comunicaciones 0

Heredia 0

Att: 11,100. **Ref:** Escobar

Comunicaciones 2-1 on agg

Sent off: Garcia (Heredia) 76min

MARTINIQUE

MARTINIQUE – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts[1]
Franciscain (C)	26	17	7	2	56	27	84
Colonial	26	14	9	3	44	19	77
Riviere-Pilote	26	13	9	4	46	26	74
Golden Lion	26	13	9	4	38	24	74
Diamantinoise	26	10	9	7	34	30	65
Robert	26	9	11	6	31	29	64
Aiglon	26	11	3	12	34	33	62
Good Luck	26	6	11	9	36	33	55
Golden Star	26	7	8	11	21	32	55
Essor-Pre'tain	26	6	10	10	36	45	54
Belimois	26	7	6	13	34	43	53
Marinoise (R)	26	6	6	14	25	42	50
Etoile (R)	26	5	7	14	22	45	48
Assaut (R)	26	3	5	18	23	52	40

[1]4pts for a win, 2pts for a draw, 1pt for a defeat

NICARAGUA

Clausura

Final

1st leg - June 1; 2nd leg - June 8

Real Esteli v Walter Ferreti 3-0, 1-0 (agg 4-0)

SURINAM

SURINAM – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Inter M'poe (C)	18	14	3	1	49	13	45
Notch	18	11	3	4	35	21	36
Leo Victor	18	9	3	6	34	21	30
Excelsior	18	8	3	7	32	36	27
Transvaal	18	8	2	8	33	32	26
WBC[1]	18	8	3	7	40	31	24
Boskamp	18	6	1	11	18	34	19
Robin Hood	18	5	3	10	18	29	18
SNL	18	5	2	11	33	40	17
Randjiet (R)	18	3	3	12	15	50	12

[1]3pts deducted

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Defence F (C)	21	14	4	3	52	21	46
Caledonia AIA	21	13	3	5	53	27	42
W Connection	21	11	5	5	45	19	38
N East Stars	21	10	8	3	32	17	38
Central	21	8	6	7	31	32	30
Police	21	3	7	11	25	43	16
St Ann's	21	2	7	12	22	49	13
T&TEC	21	2	2	17	13	65	8

No relegation in this season

UNITED STATES

Regular season:

June 29: Toronto 0 Salt Lake 1; Philadelphia 2 Dallas 2; Montreal 3 Colorado 4; DC United 0 Vancouver 1; Kansas City 3 Columbus 2; San Jose 3 Los Angeles 2; Chivas 1 New England 1.

June 30: New York 2 Houston 0.

July 3: Toronto 3 Montreal 3; Chicago 3 San Jose 2; Kansas City 1 Vancouver 1; Salt Lake 2 Philadelphia 2; Seattle 2 DC United 0.

July 4: Dallas 0 Chivas 0; Colorado 2 New York 0; Los Angeles 2 Columbus 1.

July 6: New England 2 San Jose 0; Houston 1 Philadelphia 0; Vancouver 2 Seattle 0.

July 7: Chicago 1 Kansas City 2; Columbus 1 Portland 0; Montreal 1 Chivas 1; Colorado 0 DC United 0; Los Angeles 2 Dallas 0.

July 12: Philadelphia 3 Chivas 1.

July 13: New York 4 Montreal 0; New England 1 Houston 2; Kansas City 3 Toronto 0; Dallas 0 Salt Lake 3; San Jose 1 Seattle 0; Portland 2 Los Angeles 1.

July 14: Vancouver 3 Chicago 1.

USA – REGULAR: EASTERN CONFERENCE	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kansas City	20	9	6	5	29	19	33
New York	20	9	4	7	29	24	31
Montreal	18	9	4	5	31	29	31
Philadelphia	20	8	6	6	32	30	30
Houston	19	8	5	6	22	19	29
New England	18	6	6	6	22	16	24
Columbus	19	6	5	8	23	23	23
Chicago	18	6	3	9	20	28	21
Toronto	18	2	7	9	17	27	13
DC United	19	2	4	13	8	29	10

34-round regular season (7x3 & 2x2 in own conference, 9x1 in western conference)

USA – REGULAR: WESTERN CONFERENCE	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Salt Lake	20	11	4	5	32	18	37
Portland	19	8	9	2	30	18	33
Vancouver	19	9	5	5	32	26	32
Dallas	20	8	7	5	27	27	31
Los Angeles	20	9	3	8	30	24	30
Colorado	20	7	6	7	23	22	27
Seattle	17	7	3	7	21	20	24
San Jose	21	6	6	9	21	32	24
Chivas	19	3	5	11	17	35	14

34-round regular season (8x3 in own conference, 10x1 in eastern conference)

Top 5 in both conferences will enter championship play-offs; no relegation from this league

AFRICA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group stage draw

Group A

AC Leopards (Con)
Al Ahly (Egy)
Orlando Pirates (SAf)
Zamalek (Egy)

Group B

Coton Sport (Cam)
Esperance (Tun)
Recreativo Libolo (Ang)
Sewe Sports (IvC)

Matchdays: *July 19-21, Aug 2-4, Aug 16-18, Aug 30-Sep 1, Sep 13-15, Sep 20-22*

Top 2 in both groups qualify for semi-finals

CONFEDERATION CUP

Group stage draw

Group A

Enugu Rangers (Nga)
Etoile Sahel (Tun)
Saint George (Eth)
Stade Malien (Mli)

Group B

CA Bizertin (Tun)
ES Setif (Alg)
FUS Rabat (Mor)
TP Mazembe (DRC)

Matchdays: *July 19-21, Aug 2-4, Aug 16-18, Aug 30-Sep 1, Sep 13-15, Sep 20-22*

Top 2 in both groups qualify for semi-finals

BOTSWANA

BOTSWANA – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Centre Ch'fs (C)	30	20	6	4	69	31	66
Nico	30	16	10	4	65	35	58
Defence Force	30	16	9	5	62	29	57
Gaborone	30	15	11	4	59	29	56
ECCO City	30	15	10	5	55	32	55
Meat Com'sion	30	12	9	9	41	32	45
Extension G'rs	30	13	5	12	33	40	44
Township R'rs	30	10	10	10	43	36	40
TAFIC	30	9	9	12	23	43	36
Miscellaneous	30	9	8	13	34	35	35
Motlakase	30	9	8	13	42	48	35
UF Santos	30	9	6	15	27	47	33
Notwane	30	8	7	15	33	56	31
Prisons XI	30	7	8	15	27	43	29
Mog'shane (R)	30	6	7	17	40	63	25
Highlanders (R)	30	2	5	23	15	69	11

DJIBOUTI

DJIBOUTI – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ali Sabieh (C)	18	12	5	1	53	10	41
Dikhil	18	11	3	4	32	17	36
Port	18	11	0	7	35	18	33
Garde R'caine	18	9	4	5	41	17	31
Tadjourah	18	9	4	5	27	23	31
Gendarmerie	18	7	5	6	22	20	26
CDE-Colas	18	5	6	7	22	23	21
Arhiba	18	4	3	11	18	49	15
EAD/Balbala (R)	18	3	1	14	16	59	10
SID (R)	18	2	3	13	15	45	9

GABON

GABON – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
US Bitam (C)	26	17	6	3	41	18	57
Mounana	26	13	8	5	37	20	47
Mangasport	26	12	8	6	30	21	44
Oyem	26	13	4	9	28	28	43
Cercle Mberi	26	9	12	5	29	23	39
Pelican	26	10	9	7	24	18	39
Sapins	26	9	10	7	25	23	37
Missile	26	9	8	9	21	20	35
Bongoville	26	9	6	11	25	29	33
Sogea	26	7	9	10	16	19	30
Ombilianziami	26	7	7	12	27	34	28
Solidarite	26	5	9	12	24	32	24
Ngu'asuku (R)	26	6	5	15	20	39	23
S Migoveen (R)	26	2	7	17	17	40	13

GAMBIA

GAMBIA – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Steve Biko (C)	22	8	12	2	18	8	36
Real Banjul	22	8	11	3	15	10	35
Armed Forces	22	9	4	9	22	20	31
GAMTEL	22	9	3	10	23	19	30
Samger	22	7	9	6	15	16	30
Brikama	22	4	15	3	19	17	27
Hawks	22	7	6	9	18	17	27
Ports Auth'ty	22	6	9	7	20	23	27
Interior	22	6	9	7	16	21	27
Bakau	22	4	14	4	19	20	26
Sea View (R)	22	4	14	4	12	14	26
Y Africans (R)	22	4	6	12	13	25	18

GHANA

GHANA – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Asante K'ko (C)	30	14	14	2	39	23	56
Berekum C	30	15	8	7	33	26	53
Medeama	30	14	8	8	32	25	50
Ebusua Dwarfs	30	15	5	10	40	27	50
Hearts of Oak	30	13	10	7	46	32	49
Ashanti Gold	30	13	8	9	36	29	47
Aduana Stars	30	12	9	9	28	25	45
K Faisal Babes	30	11	8	11	28	30	41
New Edubiase	30	11	7	12	28	26	40
All Stars	30	9	12	9	30	24	39
Amidaus Profs	30	10	9	11	32	33	39
Liberty Profs	30	10	8	12	31	33	38
Heart of Lions	30	9	9	12	31	33	36
Tema Youth (R)	30	7	10	13	33	35	31
Berekum A (R)	30	7	10	13	26	38	31
Tamale[1] (R)	30	0	5	25	19	73	2

[1]3pts deducted

IVORY COAST

IVORY COAST – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sewe (C)	26	18	3	5	39	18	57
ASEC	26	16	4	6	40	23	52
AFAD	26	12	9	5	31	17	45
SC Gagnoa	26	11	10	5	36	23	43
Stella	26	11	7	8	30	23	40
JCAT	26	9	8	9	28	30	35
Denguele	26	7	12	7	30	27	33
Bassam	26	7	10	9	26	31	31
Africa Sports	26	7	10	9	25	30	31
ASI	26	6	12	8	22	25	30
Korhogo	26	5	11	10	14	22	26
SOA	26	5	10	11	21	30	25
Bingerville (R)	26	5	7	14	25	42	22
EFYM (R)	26	3	7	16	14	40	16

MAURITANIA

MAURITANIA – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nouadhibou (C)	26	18	6	2	67	16	60
Ksar	26	16	9	1	39	11	57
Concorde	26	14	9	3	52	19	51
Tevragh-Zeine	26	13	10	3	41	15	49
Tidjikja	26	12	4	10	41	27	40
Assaba	26	8	10	8	25	34	34
Cansado	26	9	4	13	33	34	31
Trarza	26	5	12	9	19	25	27
Gde Nationale	26	5	11	10	22	39	26
Kedia	26	5	11	10	17	35	26
Nasr Zem Zem	26	5	9	12	27	40	24
Armee	26	5	9	12	22	43	24
Police (R)	26	4	11	11	17	42	23
Imraguens (R)	26	2	7	17	13	55	13

LEBANON

Double joy for Safa

Safa completed their first-ever double by adding the Lebanese FA Cup to their league title with a 2-1 win against Shabab Al Sahel in the Final.

Khodor Salame scored the winner after Amir Al Khaf had cancelled out Nour Mansour's opener for Safa.

Debut title...Lions XII

MALAYSIA

No AFC Cup for Lions

Despite winning the Super League for the first time, Lions XII will not be able to take their place in next year's AFC Cup as they are based in Singapore.

Lions XII's place will therefore go to runners-up Selangor, who are joined by Kelantan, who retained the Malaysian FA Cup by beating big-spending Johor Darul Takzim 1-0 in the Final with a goal from Mohd Nor Farhan.

MALDIVES

Maximum points

New Radiant became the earliest-ever winners of the league championship after taking a maximum of 42 points from their opening 14 games.

ASIA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Quarter-finals draw

Al Ahli (Sau) v Seoul (SKo)
Esteghlal (Irn) v Buriram United (Tha)
Guangzhou Evergrande (Chn) v Lekhwiya (Qat)
Kashiwa Reysol (Jap) v Al Shabab (Sau)
1st legs - Aug 21; 2nd legs - Sep 18

AFC CUP

Quarter-finals draw

Al Qadsia (Kuw) v Al Shorta (Syr)
East Bengal (Ind) v Semen Padang (Ins)
Kitchee (HK) v Al Faisaly (Jor)
New Radiant (Mdv) v Kuwait SC (Kuw)
1st legs - Sep 17; 2nd legs - Sep 24

JAPAN

July 6: Ventforet 0 Urawa 1; Tokyo 0 Sanfrecce 1; Vegalta 0 Shonan 0; Omiya 1 Sagan 1; Kawasaki 4 Kashima 2; Yokohama 1 Oita 1; Albirex 3 Kashiwa 2; Jubilo 2 Cerezo 2; Nagoya 2 Shimizu 1.
July 10: Kashima 3 Shimizu 1; Omiya 2 Nagoya 1; Shonan 1 Kashiwa 2; Jubilo 2 Albirex 1; Cerezo 2 Yokohama 1; Sanfrecce 4 Kawasaki 2; Sagan 2 Ventforet 1; Oita 0 Vegalta 1; Urawa 2 Tokyo 2.
July 13: Shimizu 3 Oita 1; Ventforet 0 Shonan 1; Vegalta 1 Jubilo 1; Kashiwa 2 Kashima 1; Kawasaki 4 Urawa 0; Yokohama 2 Omiya 1; Albirex 0 Tokyo 3; Nagoya 3 Sagan 2; Sanfrecce 1 Cerezo 0.

JAPAN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Omiya	16	11	3	2	29	13	36
Sanfrecce	16	10	3	3	28	12	33
Urawa	16	9	4	3	32	20	31
Yokohama	16	9	4	3	29	17	31
Kashima	16	8	4	4	27	24	28
Cerezo	16	7	6	3	23	16	27
Kawasaki	16	7	4	5	35	30	25
Tokyo	16	7	2	7	29	22	23
Kashiwa	16	7	2	7	26	32	23
Vegalta	16	5	7	4	18	18	22
Shimizu	16	6	3	7	18	25	21
Nagoya	16	5	3	8	21	25	18
Albirex	16	5	2	9	19	26	17
Ventforet	16	3	5	8	13	23	14
Sagan	16	3	5	8	25	36	14
Shonan	16	3	4	9	13	28	13
Jubilo	16	2	6	8	21	26	12
Oita	16	1	5	10	16	29	8

34-round season (17x2); bottom 3 will be relegated

LAOS

LAOS – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Champasak (C)	14	12	2	0	54	12	38
HA Attapeu	14	8	3	3	46	13	27
Yotha	14	8	2	4	61	23	26
Ezra	14	7	4	3	24	12	25
Police Club	14	7	2	5	61	19	23
Lane Xang	14	4	3	7	32	35	15
Eastern Star	14	2	0	12	16	73	6
Friends D't (R)	14	0	0	14	8	115	0

LEBANON

LEBANON – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Safa (C)	22	17	2	3	47	20	53
Al Nejmeh	22	14	3	5	47	22	45
Racing	22	13	1	8	38	32	40
Akhaa Ahli	22	11	6	5	33	22	39
Al Ahed	22	11	4	7	49	28	37
Sh'b Al Sahel	22	11	4	7	38	30	37
Al Ansar	22	8	8	6	35	24	32
Tadamon Sour	22	8	4	10	33	38	28
Al Egtmaaey	22	7	5	10	36	41	26
Tripoli SC	22	6	6	10	27	30	24
Al Ghazieh (R)	22	3	2	17	44	67	11
Salam Sour (R)	22	0	1	21	18	91	1

MACAU

MACAU – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Monte Carlo (C)	18	16	1	1	57	9	49
Benfica	18	16	0	2	69	4	48
Windsor Arch	18	15	1	2	61	13	46
Lam Pak	18	12	0	6	55	22	36
Policia	18	7	2	9	24	33	23
Lam Ieng	18	7	1	10	29	52	22
Kuan Tai	18	6	0	12	22	35	18
CPK	18	6	0	12	28	53	18
Kei Lun (R)	18	2	1	15	16	80	7
FA Dev'pm't (R)	18	0	0	18	8	68	0

MALAYSIA

MALAYSIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lions XII (C)	22	12	7	3	32	15	43
Selangor	22	10	10	2	31	17	40
Johor DT	22	11	7	4	32	26	40
Kelantan	22	10	6	6	32	20	36
Pahang	22	10	5	7	36	32	35
ATM	22	10	4	8	35	25	34
Perak	22	8	5	9	23	27	29
PKNS	22	8	4	10	34	34	28
Terengganu	22	7	6	9	25	31	27
T-Team	22	5	4	13	19	33	19
FELDA (R)	22	4	7	11	13	35	19
N Sembilan (R)	22	1	7	14	11	28	10

PHILIPPINES

PHILIPPINES – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Stallion (C)	18	15	1	2	60	22	46
Global	18	14	1	3	47	12	43
Loyola	18	11	5	2	50	18	38
Kaya	18	8	7	3	35	21	31
Pachanga	18	9	1	8	28	28	28
Green Archers	18	7	3	8	36	36	24
PSG	18	6	3	9	38	38	21
Nomads	18	3	4	11	16	43	13
Army[1]	18	2	1	15	20	62	7
Air Force (R)	18	2	0	16	9	59	6

[1]Army stay in top division after winning rel/prom play-off

YEMEN

YEMEN – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Yarmuk (C)	26	14	7	5	35	17	49
Al Sha'ab HM	26	14	4	8	43	29	46
Al Saqr	26	12	10	4	35	24	46
Al Ahli	26	12	5	9	40	31	41
Al Oruba	26	10	8	8	31	24	38
Al Sha'ab Ibb	26	10	7	9	31	33	37
Al Rasheed	26	9	9	8	25	23	36
Al Ittihad	26	10	6	10	35	38	36
Al Tilal	26	9	8	9	35	32	35
Al Helal	26	10	5	11	27	35	35
Al Wahda S (R)	26	8	6	12	34	32	30
Al Shula (R)	26	7	7	12	29	39	28
Al Wahda A (R)	26	5	11	10	28	39	26
Taliat Taiz (R)	26	2	7	17	19	51	13

OCEANIA

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Championship play-offs

Final

June 1 - Port Moresby (Sir John Guise)
Hekari United 3 (Dabinyaba, Komeng pen, Gunemba)
Port Moresby 0
HT: 2-0

KEY TO TABLES
(C) = champions (Q) = qualified (R) = relegated

FORTHCOMING FIXTURES

August 1
UEFA Under-19 Championship Final; Europa League 3rd qual rd 1st leg
August 2, 3 and 4
CAF Champions League group games
August 6
CONCACAF Champions League groups start
August 6 and 7
UEFA Champions League 3rd qual rd 2nd leg
August 8
Europa League 3rd qual rd 2nd leg
August 16, 17 and 18
CAF Champions League group games
August 20 and 21
UEFA Champions League play-off rd 1st leg
August 21
AFC Champions League quarter-finals 1st leg
August 22
Europa League play-off rd 1st leg
August 27 and 28
UEFA Champions League play-off rd 2nd leg
August 29
Europa League play-off rd 2nd leg
August 30
UEFA Super Cup: Bayern Munich v Chelsea
August 30 and 31
CAF Champions League group games

August 2013 Vol 53 No 12

EDITOR Gavin Hamilton
ART EDITOR Gary Payne
ASSISTANT EDITOR Nich Hills
PICTURE EDITOR Duncan Bond
NEWS EDITOR Jamie Rainbow
EDITORIAL SECRETARY June Hiscock
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Thanks this issue to Mike Hughes, Debbie Millett, Peter Neish, Dave Rallis

EDITORIAL
Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU
Tel: +44 (0) 20 3148 4817
Fax: +44 (0) 20 3148 8130
E-mail: world_soccer@ipcmedia.com

ADVERTISING AND SPONSORSHIP
Lee Jacobs
Tel: +44 (0) 20 3148 2503
+44 (0) 20 3148 2823
E-mail: lee_jacobs@ipcmedia.com

PRODUCTION MANAGER Tom Jennings
PUBLISHING DIRECTOR Hamish Dawson
MANAGING DIRECTOR Paul Williams

Advertising +44 (0) 20 3148 2503
+44 (0) 20 3148 2823
Back issues +44 (0) 20 3148 4816
Binders +44 (0) 20 3148 4816

International licensing enquiries
+44 (0) 20 314 85490
E-mail: bianca_hamilton-foster@ipcmedia.com

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Annual sub is for 12 months (13 issues, prices include postage) UK: £54.70 Europe/Eire (inc. VAT): 89.66euros (airmail) USA: $131.08 (airmail). Rest of world: £95.53 (airmail)

Periodicals paid at Rahway, NJ Postmaster: send address changes to *World Soccer*, c/o MAIL America, 365 Blair Road, Avenel NJ 07001, USA USPS004075

SUBSCRIPTIONS DEPARTMENT
Rockwood House, 9-17 Perrymount Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 3DH England Tel: +44 (0) 1444 475 675

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(* Age as of 15.06.13)

BRAZIL

GOALKEEPERS

22 Diego CAVALIERI	(30)	01.12.82	Fluminense
12 Julio CESAR	(33)	03.09.79	QPR (Eng)
1 JEFFERSON	(30)	02.01.83	Botafogo

DEFENDERS

2 Daniel ALVES	(30)	06.05.83	Barcelona (Spa)
13 DANTE	(29)	18.10.83	Bayern Munich (Ger)
14 Filipe LUIS	(27)	09.08.85	Atletico Madrid (Spa)
4 David LUIZ	(23)	22.04.87	Chelsea (Eng)
6 MARCELO	(20)	12.05.88	Real Madrid (Spa)
16 REVER	(28)	04.01.85	Atletico Mineiro
3 Thiago SILVA	(28)	22.09.84	Paris S-G (Fra)

MIDFIELDERS

20 BERNARD	(20)	08.09.92	Atletico Mineiro
5 FERNANDO	(21)	03.03.92	Shahktar Donetsk (Ukr)
17 Luiz GUSTAVO	(25)	23.07.87	Bayern Munich (Ger)
8 HERNANES	(28)	29.05.85	Lazio (Ita)
23 JADSON	(29)	05.10.83	Sao Paulo
15 JEAN	(26)	24.06.86	Fluminense
7 LUCAS Moura	(20)	13.06.92	Paris S-G (Fra)
11 OSCAR	(21)	09.09.91	Chelsea (Eng)
18 PAULINHO	(24)	25.07.88	Corinthians

FORWARDS

9 FRED	(29)	03.10.83	Fluminense
19 HULK	(26)	25.07.86	Zenit (Rus)
21 JO	(26)	20.03.87	Atletico Mineiro
10 NEYMAR	(21)	05.02.92	Barcelona (Spa)

COACH

Luiz Felipe SCOLARI	(64)	09.11.48

ITALY

GOALKEEPERS

1 Gianluigi BUFFON	(35)	28.01.78	Juventus
13 Federico MARCHETTI	(30)	07.02.83	Lazio
12 Salvatore SIRIGU	(26)	12.01.87	Paris S-G (Fra)

DEFENDERS

20 Ignazio ABATE	(26)	12.11.86	Milan
4 Davide ASTORI	(26)	07.01.87	Cagliari
15 Andrea BARZAGLI	(32)	08.05.81	Juventus
19 Leonardo BONUCCI	(26)	01.05.87	Juventus
3 Giorgio CHIELLINI	(28)	14.08.84	Juventus
5 Mattia DE SCIGLIO	(20)	20.10.92	Milan
2 Christian MAGGIO	(31)	11.02.82	Napoli

MIDFIELDERS

7 Alberto AQUILANI	(28)	07.07.84	Fiorentina
6 Antonio CANDREVA	(26)	28.02.87	Lazio
16 Daniele DE ROSSI	(29)	24.07.83	Roma
23 Alessandro DIAMANTI	(30)	02.05.83	Bologna
22 Emanuele GIACCHERINI	(28)	05.05.85	Juventus
8 Claudio MARCHISIO	(27)	19.01.86	Juventus
18 Riccardo MONTOLIVO	(28)	18.01.85	Milan
21 Andrea PIRLO	(34)	19.05.79	Juventus

FORWARDS

9 Mario BALOTELLI	(22)	12.08.90	Milan
17 Alessio CERCI	(25)	23.07.87	Torino
14 Stephan EL SHAARAWY	(20)	27.10.92	Milan
11 Alberto GILARDINO	(30)	05.07.82	Bologna
10 Sebastian GIOVINCO	(26)	26.01.87	Juventus

COACH

Cesare PRANDELLI	(55)	19.08.57

JAPAN

GOALKEEPERS

23 Shuichi GONDA	(24)	03.03.89	Tokyo
1 Eiji KAWASHIMA	(30)	20.03.83	Standard Liege (Blg)
12 Shusaku NISHIKAWA	(26)	18.06.86	Sanfrecce Hiroshima

DEFENDERS

2 Masahiko INOHA	(27)	28.08.85	Jubilo Iwata
15 Yasuyuki KONNO	(30)	25.01.83	Gamba Osaka
16 Yuzo KURIHARA	(29)	18.09.83	Yokohama F Marinos
5 Yuto NAGATOMO	(26)	12.09.86	Internazionale (Ita)
3 Gotoku SAKAI	(22)	14.03.91	Stuttgart (Ger)
21 Hiroki SAKAI	(23)	12.04.90	Hanover (Ger)
6 Atsuto UCHIDA	(25)	27.03.88	Schalke (Ger)
22 Maya YOSHIDA	(24)	24.08.88	Southampton (Eng)

MIDFIELDERS

7 Yasuhito ENDO	(33)	28.01.80	Gamba Osaka
17 Makoto HASEBE	(29)	18.01.84	Wolfsburg (Ger)
4 Keisuke HONDA	(27)	13.06.86	CSKA Moscow (Rus)
13 Hajime HOSOGAI	(27)	10.06.86	Hertha Berlin (Ger)
14 Kengo NAKAMURA	(32)	31.10.80	Kawasaki Frontale
20 Hideto TAKAHASHI	(25)	17.10.87	Tokyo

FORWARDS

11 Mike HAVENAAR	(26)	20.05.87	Vitesse (Hol)
19 Takashi INUI	(25)	02.06.88	Eintracht F'furt (Ger)
10 Shinji KAGAWA	(24)	17.03.89	Manchester Utd (Eng)
8 Hiroshi KIYOTAKE	(23)	12.11.89	Nuremberg (Ger)
18 Ryoichi MAEDA	(31)	09.10.81	Jubilo Iwata
9 Shinji OKAZAKI	(27)	16.04.86	Stuttgart (Ger)

COACH

Alberto ZACCHERONI (Ita)	(60)	01.04.53

MEXICO

GOALKEEPERS

12 Jose de Jesus CORONA	(32)	26.01.81	Cruz Azul
1 Guillermo OCHOA	(27)	13.07.85	Ajaccio (Fra)
23 Alfredo TALAVERA	(30)	18.09.82	Toluca

DEFENDERS

22 Gerardo FLORES	(27)	05.02.86	Cruz Azul
13 Severo MEZA	(26)	09.07.86	Monterrey
21 Hiram MIER	(23)	25.08.89	Monterrey
15 Hector MORENO	(25)	17.01.88	Espanyol (Spa)
4 Diego REYES	(20)	19.09.92	Porto (Por)
2 Francisco Javier RODRIGUEZ	(31)	20.10.81	America
3 Carlos SALCIDO	(33)	02.04.80	Tigres
20 Jorge TORRES NILO	(25)	16.01.88	Tigres

MIDFIELDERS

11 Javier AQUINO	(23)	11.02.90	Villarreal (Spa)
7 Pablo BARRERA	(25)	21.06.87	Cruz Azul
18 Andres GUARDADO	(26)	28.09.86	Valencia (Spa)
16 Hector HERRERA	(23)	19.04.90	Pachuca
5 Jesus MOLINA	(25)	29.03.88	America
8 Angel REYNA	(28)	19.09.84	Pachuca
6 Gerardo TORRADO	(34)	30.04.79	Cruz Azul
17 Jesus ZAVALA	(25)	21.07.87	Monterrey

FORWARDS

9 Aldo DE NIGRIS	(22)	22.07.83	Guadalajara
10 Giovani DOS SANTOS	(24)	11.05.89	Mallorca (Spa)
14 Javier HERNANDEZ	(25)	01.06.88	Manchester Utd (Eng)
19 Raul JIMENEZ	(22)	05.05.91	America

COACH

Jose Manuel DE LA TORRE	(47)	13.11.65

NIGERIA

GOALKEEPERS

23 Chigozie AGBIM	(28)	28.11.84	Enugu Rangers
16 Austin EJIDE	(29)	08.04.84	Hapoel Be'er Sheva (Isr)
1 Vincent ENYEAMA	(30)	29.08.82	Maccabi Tel Aviv (Isr)

DEFENDERS

5 Efe AMBROSE	(24)	18.10.88	Celtic (Sco)
21 Francis BENJAMIN	(28)	08.05.85	Heartland
3 Uwa ECHIEJILE	(25)	20.01.88	Braga (Por)
6 Azubuike EGWUEKWE	(24)	28.11.88	Warri Wolves
12 Solomon KWAMBE	(19)	30.09.93	Sunshine Stars
2 Godfrey OBOABONA	(22)	16.08.90	Sunshine Stars
22 Kenneth OMERUO	(19)	17.10.93	Chelsea (Eng)
17 Ogenyi ONAZI	(20)	25.12.92	Lazio (Ita)

MIDFIELDERS

15 Michel BABATUNDE	(20)	24.12.92	Kryvbas (Ukr)
18 Emeka EZE	(20)	22.12.92	Enugu Rangers
19 Sunday MBA	(24)	28.11.88	Enugu Rangers
10 John Obi MIKEL	(26)	22.04.87	Chelsea (Eng)
4 John OGU	(25)	20.04.88	Academica (Por)
13 Fegor OGUDE	(25)	29.07.87	Valerenga (Nor)

FORWARDS

9 Joseph AKPALA	(26)	24.08.86	Werder Bremen (Ger)
11 Mohammed GAMBO	(25)	10.03.88	Kano Pillars
8 Brown IDEYE	(24)	10.10.88	Dynamo Kiev (Ukr)
7 Ahmed MUSA	(20)	14.10.92	CSKA Moscow (Rus)
20 Nnamdi ODUAMADI	(22)	17.10.90	Milan (Ita)
14 Anthony UJAH	(22)	14.10.90	Cologne (Ger)

COACH

Stephen KESHI	(51)	23.01.62

SPAIN

GOALKEEPERS

1 Iker CASILLAS	(32)	20.05.81	Real Madrid
23 Pepe REINA	(30)	31.08.82	Liverpool (Eng)
12 Victor VALDES	(31)	14.01.82	Barcelona

DEFENDERS

18 Jordi ALBA	(24)	21.03.89	Barcelona
2 Raul ALBIOL	(27)	04.09.85	Real Madrid
17 Alvaro ARBELOA	(30)	17.01.83	Real Madrid
5 Cesar AZPILICUETA	(23)	28.08.89	Chelsea (Eng)
19 Nacho MONREAL	(27)	26.02.86	Arsenal (Eng)
3 Gerard PIQUE	(26)	02.02.87	Barcelona
15 Sergio RAMOS	(27)	30.03.86	Real Madrid

MIDFIELDERS

16 Sergio BUSQUETS	(24)	16.07.88	Barcelona
20 Santi CAZORLA	(28)	13.12.84	Arsenal (Eng)
10 Cesc FABREGAS	(26)	04.05.87	Barcelona
6 Andres INIESTA	(29)	11.05.84	Barcelona
4 Javi MARTINEZ	(24)	02.09.88	Bayern Munich (Ger)
13 Juan MATA	(25)	28.04.88	Chelsea (Eng)
22 Jesus NAVAS	(27)	21.11.85	Manchester City (Eng)
21 David SILVA	(27)	08.01.86	Manchester City (Eng)
8 XAVI	(33)	25.01.80	Barcelona

FORWARDS

11 PEDRO	(25)	28.07.87	Barcelona
14 Roberto SOLDADO	(28)	27.05.85	Valencia
9 Fernando TORRES	(29)	20.03.84	Chelsea (Eng)
7 David VILLA	(31)	03.12.81	Barcelona

COACH

Vicente DEL BOSQUE	(62)	23.12.50

TAHITI

GOALKEEPERS

22 Gilbert MERIEL	(26)	11.11.86	Tefana
1 Mickael ROCHE	(30)	24.12.82	Dragon
23 Xavier SAMIN	(35)	01.01.78	Dragon

DEFENDERS

8 Stephane FAATIARAU	(23)	13.03.90	Tefana
12 Edson LEMAIRE	(22)	31.10.90	Dragon
4 Teheivarii LUDIVION	(23)	01.07.89	Tefana
19 Vincent SIMON	(29)	28.09.83	Dragon
10 Nicolas VALLAR	(29)	22.10.83	Dragon
20 Yannick VERO	(23)	28.02.90	Dragon
5 Tamatoa WAGEMANN	(33)	18.03.80	Dragon

MIDFIELDERS

14 Rainui AROITA	(19)	25.01.94	Tamarii Faa'a
7 Heimano BOUREBARE	(24)	15.05.89	Tefana
6 Henri CARDINE	(31)	07.09.81	Dragon
2 Alvin TEHAU	(24)	10.04.89	Tefana
17 Jonathan TEHAU	(25)	09.01.88	Tamarii Faa'a
15 Lorenzo TEHAU	(24)	10.04.89	Tefana
18 Yohann TIHONI	(18)	20.07.94	Roniu

FORWARDS

16 Ricky AITAMAI	(21)	22.12.91	Venus
11 Stanley ATANI	(23)	27.01.90	Tefana
13 Steevy CHONG HUE	(23)	26.01.90	Dragon
21 Samuel HNANYINE	(29)	01.03.84	Dragon
9 Teaonui TEHAU	(20)	01.09.92	Dragon
3 Marama VAHIRUA	(33)	12.05.80	Nancy (Fra)

COACH

Eddy ETAETA	(43)	01.06.70

URUGUAY

GOALKEEPERS

12 Juan CASTILLO	(35)	17.04.78	Danubio
1 Fernando MUSLERA	(27)	16.06.86	Galatasaray (Tur)
23 Martin SILVA	(30)	25.03.83	Olimpia (Par)

DEFENDERS

13 Matias AGUIRREGARAY	(24)	01.04.89	Penarol
22 Martin CACERES	(26)	07.04.87	Juventus (Ita)
4 Sebastian COATES	(22)	07.10.90	Liverpool (Eng)
3 Diego GODIN	(27)	16.02.86	At Madrid (Spa)
2 Diego LUGANO	(32)	02.11.80	Malaga (Spa)
16 Maxi PEREIRA	(29)	08.06.84	Benfica (Por)
19 Andres SCOTTI	(37)	14.12.75	Nacional

MIDFIELDERS

17 Egidio AREVALO Rios	(30)	27.09.82	Palermo (Ita)
8 Sebastian EGUREN	(32)	08.01.81	Libertad (Par)
5 Walter GARGANO	(28)	27.07.84	Internazionale (Ita)
20 Alvaro GONZALEZ	(28)	29.10.84	Lazio (Ita)
14 Nicolas LODEIRO	(24)	21.03.89	Botafogo (Bra)
6 Alvaro PEREIRA	(27)	28.11.85	Internazionale (Ita)
15 Diego PEREZ	(33)	18.05.80	Bologna (Ita)
18 Gaston RAMIREZ	(22)	02.12.90	Southampton (Eng)
7 Cristian RODRIGUEZ	(27)	30.09.85	At Madrid (Spa)

FORWARDS

21 Edinson CAVANI	(26)	14.02.87	Napoli (Ita)
10 Diego FORLAN	(34)	19.05.79	Internacional (Bra)
11 Abel HERNANDEZ	(22)	08.08.90	Palermo (Ita)
9 Luis SUAREZ	(26)	24.01.87	Liverpool (Eng)

COACH

Oscar TABAREZ	(66)	03.03.47

World Soccer's GREAT TEAMS

Holland 1974-78

One of the great footballing sides of the 1970s, they twice finished as World Cup runners-up

Not to be...Holland line up for the 1974 World Cup Final against West Germany, which they lost 2-1 after going ahead early on

They were the nearly men of international football, the team of total footballers who reached successive World Cup Finals but, having done the hard part, fell to the hosts on both occasions.

Rinus Michels, the coach who had built Ajax into a European power, was the man who forged a team from rival factions of Ajax and Feyenoord players at the 1974 finals in West Germany.

With Johan Cruyff as the captain and attacking fulcrum, Holland outplayed Brazil and Argentina on their way to the Final against West Germany. They went ahead after two minutes when Cruyff was fouled before the hosts had even touched the ball. Johan Neeskens converted the penalty, but Holland failed to score a second, decisive goal and West Germany recovered.

Although Ernst Happel had replaced Michels, the team remained largely intact for the 1978 World Cup finals – with the exception of Cruyff.

There were conflicting explanations as to why Cruyff chose not to return to the international stage: variously, he was thought to have fallen out with the Dutch FA and his sponsors; he was said to be opposed to the Argentinian junta; and his wife was believed to be concerned about his safety after an attempted kidnapping. WS

THE COACH AND HIS TEAM

Rinus Michels

Arguably the greatest coach of all time and certainly the most influential as the "father" of Total Football. He masterminded the rise of Ajax, winning three European Cups before moving to Barcelona with Johan Cruyff. Nicknamed "the General", he took charge of Holland for the 1974 World Cup and returned for the 1988 European Championship, which Holland won in West Germany. He died in 2005.

Tactics

Holland followed the 4-3-3 formation so beloved of the Ajax system. Cruyff was the central forward, but with licence to drop deep and roam wide, while Rep and Rensenbrink were forwards deployed as wingers. The tough-tackling Haan was used as a sweeper, often filling in for the full-backs as they attacked. Neeskens roamed midfield, supported by Jansen and the more creative Van Hanegem.

THE STARTING XI

Jan Jongbloed
Goalkeeper
A surprise first choice who went on to set the record for Dutch league appearances.

Wim Suurbier
Defender
Attack-minded right-back from Ajax. Ended his playing career in the USA.

Arie Haan
Defender
Played his club football in midfield, with Ajax and then Anderlecht, but deployed in defence by Michels.

Wim Rijsbergen
Defender
Played at right-back for Feyenoord, but used in central defence by Holland.

Ruud Krol
Defender
Versatile left-back from Ajax. After retiring he coached extensively in Africa.

Wim Jansen
Midfielder
Strong tackler from Feyenoord who also played for Ajax after a spell in the USA.

Johan Neeskens
Midfielder
Central figure who had an complex relationship with Cruyff, who he followed to Barcelona from Ajax.

Wim Van Hanegem
Midfielder
Clever passer of the ball who operated on the left and played for Feyenoord.

Johnny Rep
Forward
Right-winger and sharp finisher who was a member of the Ajax side of the early 1970s.

Johan Cruyff
Forward
Captain, leader and chief creative force. Chose not to play at the 1978 World Cup in Argentina.

Rob Rensenbrink
Forward
Left-winger who played most of his club career in Belgium and was a star of the 1978 World Cup.

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